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THE MAKING OF A SERMON

BY

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PART I

Introductory Chapter: The Art of Bible Study

THE WRITER'S WORD TO THE READER

THE ART OF BIBLE STUDY

"Of making many books there is no end."

This is still true, and in view of the fact, that so many treatises, large and small, have already been written on the Science and Art of constructing discourse, it may seem needless to add to the number, particularly as the author claims no originality of conception, novelty of method, or exceptional homiletical faculty.

The right of a book to be must be justified by its definiteness of aim and purpose; and the object in view must determine both whether it is worthy to be received, and how it is to be judged. The purpose of these pages is more than to contribute a few outlines of sermons, or furnish hints which may be helpful and useful in the framing or framework of effective discourse. It is rather to gather up and crystallise into form some results of years of Bible study, and present conclusions which are the outcome of personal experiment as to the matter and manner of treating Scripture themes—lessons learned quite as often in the school of failure as of success.

There are some principles which underlie all powerful preaching, but which are not only sadly neglected, but little apprehended or understood. These we would thrust into the front rank, that a true basis may be laid for the knowledge and use of divine truth. These principles have to do first of all with the art of Bible study.

There are three rules which cannot be too strongly emphasised: *Search, meditate, compare.*

Search. The truths which stamp this Book as Divine,

putting between it and every other an impassable gulf, do not always lie on the surface like pebbles on the beach, to be picked up; but rather like gold or gems, in hidden veins or mines, to be dug up. No other book so bears, or so rewards, patient, untiring study. He who searches discovers, even in oft-trodden ground, what is surprisingly new, beautiful, valuable; and such discovery has no limit. The field is inexhaustible in wealth; exploration becomes explanation, with ever fresh disclosures of rich meaning, and practically new revelations of the mind of God.

MEDITATE. There is a study, akin to rumination, which yields results of singular richness. God bids the reader, like Joshua, "meditate therein day and night;" to be "like a tree, planted by the rivers of water," with roots reaching down where they habitually drink up the celestial moisture. This is a study that demands *time* to make its deepest impression. He will be a "forgetful hearer" of the word, or a superficial reader, who rests content with a hasty or casual glance. Into this mirror—the Perfect Law of Liberty—one must *continue* looking. Unlike the sensitive plate in the camera, the mind takes few instantaneous impressions which prove lasting; it needs the time exposure and the fixing solution.

COMPARE. The Word of God is its own interpreter: one part corrects or confirms another. Often the Book is its own lexicon, defining its terms, and its own commentary, expounding its meaning. It reflects its Author's unity, but it is a unity in diversity: unless there be careful comparison of its various teachings, the diversity is seen without the unity, so that, instead of all roads leading to one golden milestone, diversity seems divergence; what God meant as counterparts and correspondences appear as contradictions. But, when we search, meditate, and compare, what at first seemed blemishes become beauties, challenging further investigation, which in turn is repaid by new disclosures and revelations.

These three rules, however important, are not exhaustive. Other three, put beside them, are, if possible, more vital to the best results: *Pray, believe, obey.*

Pray. The devout frame is the secret of clear vision: "Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law!" This is a Temple of Truth of which the Builder holds the key, and unlocks only to the praying soul its secret chambers. The "Princes of this World," in their pride of worldly wisdom, stand without; while the little child who is self-distrustful and humbly seeks to be taught of the Spirit, goes within. Here we best "advance on our knees." The arrogant pretentiousness of unsanctified learning, which levels the Word of God to the human plane, and assumes that there is in it no supernatural element, is, in the matter of Bible study, a sort of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which hath no forgiveness. Whatever else a preacher does in preparing for the pulpit, let him above all pray. Otherwise, like Elisha's servant, who at first saw nothing, though the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire, he will remain blind to the highest verities. There is no clarifier for spiritual vision like Prayer. It is God's eye salve.

Believe. It is a unique law of spiritual life, that knowing is not in order to believing, but believing is in order to knowing. Faith is not so much the result, as the condition, of the highest knowledge. Disbelief and unbelief have a strange power of arresting spiritual intelligence and hindering spiritual instruction. Persisted in, they produce incapacity, putting fetters upon the understanding. God sent Isaiah to say to Ahaz, "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." (Isaiah vii. 9.) Here is a delicate play on words, difficult to convey by translation: "if ye will not confide, surely ye shall not abide." The deep meaning is that if they would not believe they would not be established in *knowledge.* The mere scientist prides himself on his incredulity: he be-

lieves only what he scientifically knows, and laughs at Christian faith as credulity. But the docile disciple learns that only by implicitly trusting the Word of the Lord can he climb to the loftiest heights of certainty. Doubt dims the eye; distrust cramps and cripples the spirit. When a preacher begins to doubt, his pulpit loses its dynamic, and becomes destructive of faith, rather than constructive.

Obey. Nothing can be more important, even to the understanding of the truth, than to practice it. "If any man will *do* His will, he shall *know* of the teaching." (John vii. 17.) Obedience is the great organ of spiritual revelation. Doing the will of God is the divine condition of spiritual light—of further illumination. Disobedience brings darkness, and *is* darkness. The preacher must himself practice what he preaches, otherwise spiritual vision will be dim, and, if the blind lead the blind, only the ditch is before both. To translate into holy living what one is learning is the supreme secret of teaching the truth to others. The experimental element imparts strange authority and unction to testimony: it enables the preacher to speak as a witness—one who knows. Then it is that the tree, planted by the river of God, transmutes into sap the water of the living Word, and so makes possible the leaf, bloom, and fruit of abundant service.

In a word, from first to last the true Bible student needs to keep in the presence of its Author, who is its only adequate Exegete, Commentator, Interpreter. None can explain His own Text Book like the Master Teacher Himself; and to be a docile pupil in His school is to acquire that spiritual learning which fits for spiritual teaching, and for which the best instruction of human schools can never be a substitute. Indeed, unsanctified scholarship rather makes the Cross of Christ of none effect.

We venture to put in a plea for *expository* preaching, which has a charm and a power of its own. Many mod-

ern sermons are *un*textual, isolating the text from its surroundings, and losing therefore the light reflected upon it by the connection.

The critical study of the original tongues has great advantages. One grand correction to the loose notions of inspiration, now prevalent, is the devout and minute examination of the very *words* of Scripture, their number and gender, mood and tense, case and voice, derivation and arrangement. Such study will show with what divine discrimination the language is chosen, and that the words could be displaced and replaced by no others without loss of sense and force. After a thousand readings, new wonders are revealed; words grow in meaning, and come into new relations with one another, and with the thought of God, somewhat as stars, gazed at, range themselves in constellations. To perceive such wealth of significance, such skill in selection and arrangement, proves to the student that inspiration covers not only the "concepts" but the language which is the incarnation of the thought.

But, while Biblical study should be minute in details, it should not be less careful and painstaking in seeking to find and bring out the full range and scope of the truth. The grammar and lexicon should prepare for the commentary. The microscopic examination which reveals delicate forms of expression and shades of meaning, however valuable in itself, cannot compensate for the lack of that telescopic vision which takes in, with wider sweep, the whole firmament of truth. Words belong in sentences, sentences in paragraphs, paragraphs in discourses and arguments, which extend through chapters, or, perhaps, a whole book; so that only by surveying a Gospel narrative or an epistle from some commanding "inspiration point," where it is seen in its unity and totality, can we get the keenest insight into particulars.

For example, certain single words and phrases are found to have in them a world of suggestion, not simply as sage sayings or wise proverbs, in separation, but

as members having an organic relation to the whole body of teaching. In the human frame, a capillary is an interesting object for microscopic study—an exceedingly minute, hair-like tube with its delicate bore; but no capillary can be understood without tracing its connection with the entire organism. These small vessels unite the extremities of veins and arteries, so that without them the circulation of the blood would be impossible. And Biblical phrases, whatever wisdom they exhibit in themselves, have a vital connection with the whole system of revealed truth. They often sum up what has gone before, and anticipate what is to come after. Some of them are connecting links between different dispensations, or the two Testaments, revealing a deep divine purpose and plan, which could not have been known to the human writer, and therefore proving a higher Authorship.

Instances of the wide-reaching bearing of single words will occur to every Bible student. The "wherefores" and "therefores" of Paul and Peter are often links in a chain of reasoning, reaching over a wide space, the conclusion losing force unless every link between the premises and final conclusion is traced. To appreciate and apply that great saying: "WHEREFORE, He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him,"* the argument of the whole Epistle to the Hebrews must be mastered. When Paul writes to the Romans, "I beseech you THEREFORE, brethren by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies, a living sacrifice,"† that word, therefore, draws its force from all the preceding chapters. When Peter writes to the Elect Dispersion, "WHEREFORE, girding up the loins of your mind, being sober, hope to the end,"‡ he is appealing to these pilgrims of hope, strangers in an enemy's country, sojourning for a season, on their way to the heavenly inheritance, to avoid entanglement with hindrances, intoxication with frivolities, and diversion from eternal verities to temporal vanities. Paul, in writing to Corinth,

* Hebrews vii. 25 † Romans xii. 1. ‡ 1 Peter i. 13.

"THEREFORE, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," * is summing up, in one grand exhortation, the only extended and exhaustive argument on the resurrection of the dead anywhere found in Scripture. That final conclusion is the apex of a pyramid, in which all its lines and angles meet—the capstone and crown of a structure of argument which must be seen in its entirety or the massive grandeur of the theme is lost to view.

Comparative study of Scripture yields also rich suggestion and often helps greatly in exposition.

Comparison of narrative with narrative, or of different statements of one essential fact or truth, discloses both resemblances and differences, otherwise unnoticed. Careless readers confuse records of distinct events, treating them as identical; as, for example, the accounts of the healing of the centurion's servant and of the nobleman's son,† yet at least eight marked points of divergence separate these two occurrences. In one case, a nobleman, himself apparently a Jew, pleads in his own person for his son; the malady is fever; he begs Jesus to go with him, but He does not; the father's faith is rebuked for its weakness, and the healing word is connected with Cana. In the other case, a centurion, himself a Gentile, pleads, through Jewish Elders, for his servant; the malady is palsy; he bids Jesus not to come Himself, but He apparently goes; the faith of the suppliant is commended as great and the word of healing is connected with Capernaum.

Again comparison unveils suggestive correspondences, as when we put side by side the three conspicuous references to "thorns and thistles"—the signs of curse.‡ These are first mentioned as the sign that even the *ground* was cursed for man's sin. Then they are referred to by the "Evangelical Prophet," as displaced by signs of blessing when God's gracious rain, coming down

* 1 Corinth. xv. 58. † Matthew viii. 5-10, John iv. 46-53.
‡ Genesis iii. 17, 18; Isaiah lv. 10-13; Hebrews vi. 1-8; x. 26-31.

from heaven, makes the earth fruitful in seed for the sower and bread for the eater, and the fir tree and myrtle, beautiful, fragrant and useful, the planting of the Lord, spring up in their stead. And, finally, with these previous passages obviously in mind, the writer to the Hebrews contrasts the receptive soil of the believer's heart with the stubborn unbelief of the rejector of grace; the one, as ground on which the rain oft comes down, which drinks in God's gracious moisture, and responds, bringing forth grateful herbs, and so receiving new blessing from above; the other, under the same heavenly outpour, persisting in its noxious crop of evil, and being rejected, and, nigh unto a second cursing, to be swept by the burning fires of God's wrath. The contrast suggests a double message, equally mighty for warning to sinners and encouragement to saints.

A searching study of Scripture will reveal an undoubted *mystical* element, a peculiar quality or faculty which it is difficult to express in words, of suggesting a deeper meaning which escapes the careless casual reader.

For example, the whole Word of God is indirectly *prophetic,* forecasting what is to come. Rites and ceremonies, precepts and promises, fasts and feasts, persons and events—all have a typical bearing. The *Messianic* element pervades the entire fabric of Scripture, like a concealed pattern in a tapestry; and where at first glance it was most obscure, to the practised eye it afterwards appears most obvious, as the astronomer sees the "patterns" of the heavens, the constellations and zodiacal signs, where the common eye sees only scattered stars. In the works of God, every enlargement of visual power and observation, through the lenses of the telescope, microscope, and spectroscope, brings to light hitherto hidden marvels of the Creative Hand. So, in the Word of God, every increase of real insight reveals new proofs of the same Divine Mind and Hand. The Bible thus becomes a new firmament showing His handiwork, declaring His

glory, drawing to itself the steady gaze of the student, and fascinating him with its ever-new wonders. Sometimes phrases which have been hopelessly enigmatic, or construed as poetic and figurative, prove to be literally true, in the light of historic and scientific discoveries, and to have wrapped up for centuries the secrets of nature or the future.

This mystical element in Scripture will be found in *parabolic* forms, of which there are three: Parabolic *sayings,* as in Luke xv. and John xv.; parabolic *doings,* or acts, as in miracles of healing, all of which have a moral meaning,* exhibiting in the physical sphere Christ's power over spiritual ailments; and parabolic *objects,* or forms and patterns, as in the Tabernacle, its structure and furniture, priesthood and vestments, sacrifices and ceremonies.

The blessing upon those who search the Scriptures is by no means confined to such as have access to the original tongues. There are many prevailing notions and types of training for the work of the Gospel ministry. But, if efficiency be the standard by which they are to be tried, almost any other qualification may be more easily dispensed with than a true knowledge of the *English* Bible, or the Word of God in the familiar tongue of the people. What is needed is a practical mastery of the Book as a whole; and if there must be a choice between a linguistic, technical scholarship on the one hand and a practical working familiarity with the Book as a guide to souls, on the other, without hesitation the latter must have preference. We heard a pulpit orator, in the course of a brilliant *concio ad clerum,* sarcastically sneer at those who, "with a limp-covered Bagster under their arm, go about to teach the ignorant, having never themselves seen the inside of a university or a theological school," while before him sat more than one man, his Bagster in hand, who, with "little Latin and less Greek," could far surpass

*Luke v. 24, 32.

him in thorough knowledge of the contents of that Bible and in the skilful use of such knowledge in leading souls to God.

It needs no unusual discernment to see, if the eye be not blinded by prejudice, that one sign of the times is the demand for a more thorough teaching of the English Bible and a more biblical type of preaching. Humble men who, by painstaking study become well acquainted with the Word of God, get spiritual insight into its meaning, and learn experimentally how to handle it as the sword of the Spirit, are used of God to a marked degree; while scholars, expert in criticism, but lacking in a devout spirit toward God and a sympathetic spirit toward men, are comparatively set aside in soul winning.

The greater part of the beauties of God's Book are to be seen in any good translation, and in none more than in our noble English version. He who can read this only will find that careful, prayerful reading of a whole gospel or epistle at one sitting is like mounting the Matterhorn to survey the wide landscape around and beneath. To read thus continuously and studiously until the whole scope of a book is grasped will disclose the key words that unlock its secret chambers; as when, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, search shows how those three brief injunctions, DRAW NEAR, LAY HOLD, HOLD FAST, express all its practical lessons. Devout study will, like the miner's pick-axe, constantly open up new veins of rich ore, dislodging fresh nuggets of precious metal, suggesting other unexplored depths with still richer treasures; and, after hundreds of years, in our "Anglo-Saxon" Bible we shall find new and unexpected depths of meaning which evidence a Divine authorship, having lost little of their force by transfer to our own tongue. That preaching will not fail to convince and convert, sanctify and edify, and qualify for service, which is saturated with the Word of God; and native preachers, from heathen tribes, have proven this, though they had

no translation to depend upon but a rude and blundering attempt, based upon imperfect knowledge of a language now first reduced to writing and scarcely furnishing any adequate terms to convey Divine thoughts.

The fact that those who comparatively get a mastery of the Bible in their own tongue are often so conspicuously useful has found more than one recognition in our day. Conferences and conventions, such as those at Mildmay and Keswick in Britain, and Northfield and Winona in America, find their main attraction in systematic Bible study and exposition. For a like reason training schools, such as Mr. Moody founded at Chicago, Dr. Gordon at Boston, and Dr. Guinness in London, have had a larger body of students than many of the more classic schools of theology, because they provide fuller facilities and give more time for Bible study and send forth men that, if knowing little else, are, like Apollos, mighty in the Scriptures.

Some theological schools, of the best order, have established and endowed a chair of the English Bible, and filled it, not with some mere fossil of linguistic learning, but with some thoroughly spiritual teacher, himself an effective preacher, who would be fitted to quicken spiritual life and power in others. Such experiments have proved so successful that their success is no longer doubtful. It is possible that in seeking too large a range of education, concentration is sometimes lost, and we get our minds more occupied with science, philosophy, history, poetry, systematic theology and theoretic homiletics, than with the central, vital truths around which Redemption revolves. It may be well to study the structure of the bow and arrow, but it is more important to learn to be a good archer and hit the mark.

From whatever point of view regarded, the devout and diligent study of God's great Book cannot be too strongly urged upon, not only preachers, but all disciples. But especially do we crave the trumpet tongue of some

new Luther, to peal out in the ears of all who attempt to guide souls, those twin injunctions of our Lord: "Search the Scriptures" and "Preach the Gospel"—commands so vitally linked with each other and with all true service as to be inseparable. Any man who hopes, in God's eyes, to fill any useful and honoured place in the present era, as a preacher of the Gospel, must undertake so far to be master of his Bible, as not only to understand its great message but how to present it with all the spiritual force which a thorough knowledge of its contents will impart.

Nor is "preaching the Gospel" by any means so common as one might think. This hackneyed phrase was never meant to narrow the range of our testimony by running our appeals in a rigid rut. It is inclusive of all Biblical truth which bears on Redemption as a Divine scheme or a human experience; or, as Dr. Alexander Maclaren so well says: "He who fixes one arm of his compasses in the cross may sweep over as wide a circle as the other arm of his compasses allows." But there is much that finds its way into the modern pulpit which it would be more laxity than charity to justify as Gospel preaching. Historical lectures, poetic essays, ethical discourses, philanthropic appeals, however entertaining and instructive, may be far from Biblical and evangelical. "Preach the preaching that I bid thee" limited Jonah's message and should define ours. In a matter so solemn as that of representing God to men as His ambassador, diversions are perversions. To go beyond our instructions forfeits our unique authority. The pulpit is not a mere platform. It has its distinct province, and political harangues, rhetorical word painting, and moral lectures are outside its sphere.

Two centuries ago, when Blackstone the lawyer went the round of London pulpits, he could not tell, in most cases, from what he heard, whether the preacher were a follower of Confucius or Buddha, Mahomet or Christ.

Were the experiment repeated to-day in too many cases it would be with like results. The writer, visiting a cathedral on a Sunday, heard from a distinguished canon an ornate sermon. Amid much that was instructive there was not one vital Scripture truth or one word to help a sinner to salvation or a saint to holiness. It was a plea for Anglicanism, undisguised by even a thin veil. The same day, at evening, he heard the late Mr. Spurgeon on Paul's prayer for the Ephesians.* It bristled with saving, sanctifying, edifying Bible truth. It was full of the love of God in Christ; it introduced the hearer to the science of Divine mensuration—the depths and heights unfathomable of the grace that reaches even the least and lowest. It represented the Gospel of salvation at its very core and pith.

A similar experience, with like contrasts, befell the writer in his own land. In a stately church edifice, a "pulpit prince" was eloquently glorifying humanity; using a text, full of gospel truth, only as hook on which to hang his own wares—appealing to the better element in manhood, in a way that might as well have befitted Rufus Choate, John Morley, Moncure D. Conway, or Keshub Chunder Sen. In substance he said that human nature has infinite capacity for improvement, and he who is at the ladder's foot may climb to the highest rung if he will. Just afterward, crowds were flocking, though in intense summer heat, to hear a thoroughly Biblical preacher unfold a Scripture germ, somewhat as an Oriental magician makes to grow, before the bewildered eyes of observers, a seed which bursts into leaf, bloom, and fruit. From that gathering, throngs went with the vital truths of the Word lodged in their hearts.

Between these two styles of pulpit discourse there is no comparison as to worth or power. Yet, while the former baffles all but masters of the literary and esthetic who possess oratorical genius, the latter, with its superior

* Ephes. iii. 17-19.

practical advantages, is within reach of those of mediocre ability who are diligent and devout. And it is a strange proof of the perversity of human nature that so many are caught in these snares of carnal ambition, while they instinctively feel the higher value and effectiveness of a thoroughly scriptural and spiritual type of preaching.

We are bidden to "Covet earnestly the best gifts," and what better gift is there than a thorough insight into the Word of God, with a real mastery of its contents for practical purposes? We know preachers, more than one, who, without any phenomenal powers, have, by painstaking study of the English Bible, fitted themselves so to teach the Word of God that, in the inquiry room, they can meet any perplexity or difficulty that hinders sinner or saint, by turning at once to its Scriptural remedy. To acquire such command of the Scriptures it is well to use always *one* Bible, so that familiarity with it may serve to fix on the mind's eye the *locality on the page,* of all conspicuous texts; so that, without being able always to cite chapter and verse, one can put the finger on a leading precept or promise. There is a *pictorial* memory that greatly assists a defective *numerical* memory.

The minister of Christ is also a steward of the mysteries of God.* Such stewardship is a solemn trust. "Moreover it is required of stewards that a man be found faithful." The preacher must surely know his Bible, and the Lord Jesus Christ who is its grand central theme, and the Holy Spirit who is at once its inspirer and interpreter. Lack of homiletic faculty may be pardoned, or of oratorical genius, but there is a higher faculty of spiritual insight which none need lack, and a practical talent for so using the sword of the Spirit as to prick men's hearts; and then for so applying the balm of grace as to heal the wound. Wisdom of words often makes the cross of Christ of none effect, while the

*1 Corinth. iv. 1.

"foolishness of preaching" is used by God to save them that believe. We must not forget, however, that this is no warrant for preaching foolishness, or for being satisfied with anything short of heavenly wisdom. Laziness and shiftlessness are never more unseemly than when they dishonour the high calling of a Bible teacher or gospel preacher. In this work there can never be too much pains, prayer or patience. The subject and object of preaching are too grand to allow of indolent habits or an indifferent spirit. Let him who has but the humblest measure of intellectual faculty whet the edge of his dull weapon upon the Word of God, and prove how a sharp tool may compensate for little strength; while those who possess the alabaster flask of costly culture break it with lavish devotion for the Master's sake, and outpour its rich contents upon His sacred feet!

The pages which follow these introductory words are little more than a record of results reached by the writer, in seeking to study God's Word according to the method and spirit herein commended to others, and it is hoped that some examples and illustrations of these principles may here be found.

The contents are of a varied character; sometimes brief outlines, fragmentary and incomplete, and again fuller studies of great themes; but in either case nothing more than a few specimens, gathered by the way, representing excursions into a territory of Divine truth too vast to be fully explored. Careful study has brought to light hidden parallelisms, symmetry of structure, hitherto unsuspected, but lending new proportion to truth; sevenfold completeness, not apparent on the surface of a passage; or subtle links of connection reaching through chapters. New light has been thrown upon some texts by minute examination of the context, or careful collation and comparison of parallel passages. Sometimes a single sentence, a phrase, or even a word has proved

to be the pivot around which other truths revolve and on which they depend. Meditation has given insight, disclosing a wider comprehensiveness of meaning, or revealing new grandeur in some central conception which dominates other subordinate thoughts, and in some cases making all Scripture to stand out as an organism, in which all truth is seen to be vitally and organically related. In a few instances large themes have been traced, like threads, through the entire fabric of Scripture, such as the teaching about the unseen world with its angelic and demoniac hosts, or the doctrine of the Person and Province of the Holy Spirit.

Some repetitions will be found in these Scripture Studies; but it is because the same thought sometimes bears an important relation to more than one theme. But even Paul was not ashamed to repeat: "To *write the same things* to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe."—*Philip.* iii. 1.

The reader will easily discover the writer's partiality for great texts and comprehensive themes; for Biblical phrases which outline the whole plan of Redemption, or forecast the whole future history of the redeemed; for sentences that are turning points in argument, or words that are keys to larger or lesser chambers of mystery. Even Paul hinted that "five words" have sometimes more significance than "ten thousand" others, and it is worth any man's lifelong effort to find what words, recorded by the Spirit, are specially pregnant with celestial meaning and eternal issues.

At least one hope the author indulges: that, however blundering or imperfect these studies may seem to the reader, others may be stimulated to deeper investigation of the exhaustless mines of wealth contained in Holy Scripture, and that more capable and capacious minds may be led to pursue methods which, in this divine field of research, will yield richer results in far more valuable discoveries.

ARTHUR T. PIERSON.

PART II

Studies of Texts and Themes

The Making of a Sermon

The Great Starting Point

"In the Beginning, God."—*Genesis i.* 1.

I.—What four words are these to begin the *Inspired Revelation!* Of all Holy Scripture He is the Beginning. From Him it proceeds as waters from a fountain, or thoughts from a living Intelligence. Whoever may be the human speaker, He alone is the Revealer, Legislator, Inspirer. Whoever may be the human writer, He alone is the Divine Author.

II.—What four words are these to begin the *Story of Creation!* There was a beginning to all but God alone. He had no beginning because He was to all else the beginning, the starting point of matter, form, force and life. Here is a denial of Pantheism and Polytheism, materialism and atheism, and every other false system of Religion.

III.—What four words are these to begin the disclosure of *God's Nature!* "He is before all things and by Him all things consist"; He is in all things and by Him all things subsist. He is after all things, and to Him all things move as final end and goal, Himself alike without end as without beginning, source from which, sea into which, all being pours!

IV.—What four words are these to begin a *Consecrated Life!* In Him the new creation has its beginning. He, as the Spirit of Life, brooding over our moral chaos, brings order out of confusion, light out of darkness, life out of death. A Holy Walk begins with Him; it has no other starting point, and each step forward and upward is a fresh beginning with Him.

V.—What four words are these to begin a *New Year,* nay, each new *day!* "I have set the Lord always before me," said the devout David. If He is before us as the object of Faith, we shall endure as seeing Him who is invisible; if as the centre of Love, the carnal will cease to control; if as the End of Hope, Eternity will set the measure to Time, not Time to Eternity.

VI.—What four words are these to begin every *new enterprise* and *endeavour!* Performance and purpose starting with Him. If He is first in thought, love, choice, that is piety. If first in reverence and homage, that is worship. If first in activity and obedience, that is service. When He is first in supremacy and glory, that will be Heaven.

Well may Jacobi say: "My watchword, and that of my reason, is not I, but one who is more and better than I: One who is entirely different from what I am: I mean God! I neither am nor care to be, if He is not!"

"For OF Him, and THROUGH Him, and TO Him are all things: To whom be glory, for ever and ever. Amen!"

The Habit of Godliness

"My soul followeth hard after Thee."—*Psalm lxiii.* 8.

LITERALLY "cleaveth hard," involving three things: diligence in effort, nearness of contact, and tenacity of grip—a fast hold. These six words express a habit of godliness, an ever present and close following after God. The emphasis is upon the present tense—the continuous present. But a careful search into the structure of this devout lyric shows the past, present and future tenses of the believer's life, and hints their mutual relation.

For example, the *Present:* "My soul *thirsteth* for

thee; my flesh *longeth* for Thee; I *remember* Thee upon my bed, and *meditate* on Thee in the night watches." "Thou *art* my God."

The *Past:* "I *have seen* Thee in the Sanctuary. Thou *hast been* my help."

The *Future:* "Early *will* I seek Thee. My lips *shall* praise Thee. I *will* bless Thee while I live; I *will* lift up my hands in Thy name. My soul *shall* be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth *shall* praise Thee. In the shadow of Thy wings *will* I rejoice. The King *shall* rejoice in God."

These tenses have obviously a mutual relation.

I.—The past, recalled by reflection and remembrance, inspires to present gratitude and duty, love and joy. Past visions and interpositions of God quicken longing for other visions, and stimulate faith to a new following of God. What a hint of the hallowed office of the powers of Reflection and Memory!

II.—Note the peculiar emphasis upon the present. Four present tenses are prominent, and how inclusive! There is such longing as only finds expression in intense thirst, the most agonising form of desire. There is reflection and remembrance, and the result is a close following.

III.—And all this is the prophecy of a future. Here is the inspiration of Hope, and hope kindles prayer and praise, and assures of complete satisfaction and joy. The soul that looks back with holy memories looks forward with confident expectation.

The Present is, however, always the Crisis. It is the To-day of Action. Without it Memory is but a dream, and Hope but an illusion. MY SOUL FOLLOWETH HARD AFTER THEE. The nearest New Testament passage to this is 1 Peter ii. 21: "Leaving us an example that ye should *follow His steps.*" And four particulars are given there which delineate that matchless example:

1. A sinless conduct. "Who did no sin."

2. A guileless mouth. "In whose mouth guile was not found."

3. A surrendered will. "Committed himself to Him," &c.

4. A vicarious passion. "Who bare our sins."

Are not these to be also the features of our following?—a life without blame, a tongue without guile, a surrender of will and a spirit of unselfishness?

The Simplicity that is in Christ

"I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."—*2 Cor. xi.* 3.

The primal reference here is to corruptions that crept in by the influence of pagan customs, ceremonies and traditions, disturbing primitive order and decorum. But the principle is too important to be limited to such narrow application. The contrast is between Christian simplicity and Satanic subtlety. The whole history of the Church reveals his wiles in corrupting the simple faith, life, and worship of the early Church assembly. In a single year radical changes took place, as may be seen by contrasting 1st Timothy and Titus with 2nd Timothy, 2nd Peter and Jude.

We need continually to go back to the beginning and inquire as to the primitive simplicity both of doctrine and practice. We have only to look at present standards, and then at Apostolic teaching and Church conduct, to see that there have been very serious and alarming departures from the then prevalent ideas and ideals. In fact, some marked features of primitive church life have, in a measure, if not altogether, disappeared. Of these the following deserve a very prominent consideration:

I.—The *Holy Spirit's Conscious Presence and Presi-*

dency in the Church. Nothing was more characteristic of the Early Church. The Spirit of God had, then, in a sense, His Incarnation: Pentecost being His Birthday, and the Church His Body. How real this fact was appears from three conspicuous instances. (Acts v. 9, xiii. 2, xv. 28.)

II.—The *Prominence of Prayer*, definite and united supplication and intercession, and its prevailing power. Pentecost was the result and reward of ten days' continuous waiting on God. Afterward the very place was shaken where the disciples were assembled, and Peter's release from prison and Herod's sudden judgment were undoubted interpositions in answer to prayer.

III.—The *Equality of Believers.* All were together and had all things in common. When scattered abroad, all preached Jesus. The privileges were in common, and so were their obligations. They shared their goods that none among them should lack, and shared the work of evangelisation that none of the destitute around them should be without the Gospel.

IV.—*Separation from the World.* Never since, has the line of demarcation been so clearly drawn. They were chosen out of the world and sent back into it, not to be of it, but to bear witness to it. The undisputed imminence of the Second Advent gave emphasis to this separation and made them unworldly.

The Recompensing God

"The Lord God of Recompenses shall surely requite."—*Jeremiah li.* 56.

This is one of the chosen names of Jehovah. He is the Lord God of Recompenses. The retributive aspect of the Divine character is not only no blemish; it is as necessary to His perfection as any other attribute, and itself as truly a perfection as His Law or His Love.

The arch of government rests on two pillars—the sanctions of Law—the certainty of reward to welldoing and retribution to evildoing. If either of these pillars gives way, the arch and all that rests upon it fall into wreck and ruin. Comp. Psalm ix. 16, Daniel v. 27, 1 Samuel ii. 3, Judges i. 6, 7. Jeremiah specially reveals how God used Babylon, first, as the "hammer" to break in pieces and bruise other nations, and even His own people who needed correction; and then in turn He broke in pieces the "hammer of the whole earth."—Jer. li. 23, 31.

NOTE:

I.—God's character, as the God of Recompenses.

II.—The certainty of His requital.

III.—The perfection of His knowledge and equity.

IV.—The singular correspondence of sin and penalty.

V.—The merciful purposes of His long suffering.

VI.—The fearfulness of His final judgment.

VII.—The grace of His provision for pardon.

The LORD GOD OF RECOMPENSES appears often in poetic retribution, as in the judgments preceding the Passover. For eighty years the Egyptians sought to drown all Hebrew males; in one night vengeance was exacted for all these eighty years of murderous oppression, Haman plotted to hang Mordecai; he and his sons were the first that swung from the scaffold, etc. It would be interesting to collate all the instances of such exact recompense in sacred history, as the infallible proof of His moral government; for no chance coincidences can account for the awful exactness of His adaptation of penalty to offence, any more than for the exact correspondence of rhythm and rhyme in the lines of a poem.

Conditions of Prosperity

"Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."—*Psalm i.* 3.

THREE times, and at marked turning points in history, we have this lesson repeated. It was taught to Joshua as he assumed leadership of the Hebrew hosts; to David as he wrote the first of these spiritual lyrics, and to James as he left his witness to the New Testament Church.

Comp. Joshua i. 8, James i. 25.

This psalm, however, reveals to us what are the *conditions* of such universal prosperity, under the figure of a tree. Nowhere else are they *all* presented at one glance, though elsewhere one, two, or even three of the four may be found. Here, in this first psalm, which is the natural vestibule to the whole collection, the grand factors that enter into the full conception of spiritual prosperity, all meet the reader.

I.—LIFE. This is a *living tree*, not dead wood. There must be divine life in the soul.—John iii. 16, 36.

II.—HEALTH. This depends upon healthful surroundings. The tree is "*planted*" by the irrigating channels of the Word.

III.—GROWTH. This depends on the assimilation of the Word to the inner life, as the water is transmuted into sap, and this into leaf, bloom, and fruit.

IV.—FRUIT. The final outcome, "whose seed is in itself after his kind."

It is interesting to trace in other passages of Scripture the partial lessons here taught as a whole. Thus, 1 Peter ii. 2, 2 Peter iii. 18, and especially John xv. 1-10, the last the nearest in resemblance to the first psalm, and an advance upon it, because the personal abiding in Christ is an advance upon the planting by the water channels. Not until the *Living* Word was given could

the full significance of the first psalm and its obvious reference to the *written* Word have their most illuminative exposition.

But in both Scriptures we are taught that we must first of all *live* God's life; that this life must have *healthy conditions* of meditative communion with the Word, and with God through it, in order to *grow*; and that on all these conditions depends the final result and crown of all, *fruit* abundant and constant.

The Believer and the World

"They are not of the World."—*John xvii.* 14.

Four portions of Scripture, taken together, form a complete guide to the child of God as to his relations to this world. First, the whole of John xvii., our Lord's Intercessory Prayer, then 1 John ii. 15-17, James iv. 4, and Revelation xvii., xviii. In the first of these, we are indirectly taught *our position and mission* in the world; in the second, the *danger of loving the world* and lusting after it; in the third, the *essential hostility of the world to God;* and in the fourth, the final *doom of the world* and the necessity of *separation from it.*

In many other Scriptures various hints are given of the Believer's duty or danger, with reference to the world; but these four testimonies are unusually complete and comprehensive, and leave little if anything else needful in the way of warning or teaching. Though they closely intertwine they are distinct. In each there is a special emphasis. Christ, in His prayer, teaches us that we have a definite witness to the world, and John shows us how that witness is annulled by the worldly spirit. James sharply reveals the irreconcilable enmity between God and the world, and in the Apocalypse we are warned of the risk of being involved in its plagues

and destructive judgments. There is thus an increasingly loud and alarming voice of admonition and protest. Our Lord speaks as in a gentle whisper, as becomes a prayer; John's words are like the mutterings of distant thunder; James speaks more sharply, as though the danger were more present, and imminent, and threatening, and the appeal more intense; and in the awful words about Babylon we seem to hear the trump of doom sounding in our very ears, as though the angels once more bade us "Haste! Escape for your life!"

In our Lord's Intercessory Prayer there are *seven* expressions that together teach a complete lesson.

I.—We are *chosen and given to Him out of* the world,
II.—And by Him *sent back into* the world.
III.—We are *in* the world,
IV.—But not *of* it.
V.—*Hated by* the world,
VI.—But *kept from the evil* that is in it.
VII.—And, finally, through us the world *is to believe.*

Here our whole relation to the world is outlined by a few strokes of the Divine pencil; our election, our mission, our position, our separation, our opposition, our preservation, our witness.

A Challenge to Courage

"Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled."—1 *Peter iii.* 12-15; comp. *Isaiah viii.* 12.

This seems to be a reference to Israel at Kadesh. Comp. Numbers xiii. 25—xiv. 9.

The language is appropriate to this, and to no other experience of Israel in the desert. "Fear ye not their fear, neither be thrown into consternation; but sanctify the Lord God always in your hearts."

When the spies returned, all bore essentially the same

witness to the beauty and fertility of the land—as one flowing with milk and honey—and as to the giant sons of Anak; the point of unfaithfulness was the *fear and despair of the ten,* as *contrasted with the confidence and courage of the two*—Joshua and Caleb. These two did not depreciate the danger, but they appreciated the Deliverer. They saw that the face of the Lord is against them that do evil, and that we have only to sanctify Him in our hearts, and let Him be our fear and dread, and we shall fear no others. Their defence is departed from them, but the Lord is our refuge and strength, and if we go against them in His name they will be as bread for us, instead of devouring us. Joshua xiv. contains a most instructive passage as to the final result of such fidelity to God and trust in Him as Caleb showed. Even at an advanced age, when natural strength fails, he was more than able to cope with the foe, however gigantic; and it is significant that the very stronghold of the giants became his own possession, inheritance and abode.

The lessons are plain and most forcibly taught.

I.—Filial fear of God drives out servile fear of man.

II.—Harm cannot come to the holy. Piety is safety.

III.—We are not to look at the human foe, but at the Divine Friend.

IV.—Even hindrances become helps to him who is on God's side.

V.—The grand necessity: Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.

The Heart's Rest in God

"Be content."—*Hebrews xiii.* 5.

This whole concluding portion of this sublime Epistle, from verses 5 to 21, seems to belong together, and teach seven consecutive lessons of a similar sort, as to the Heart's Rest in God.

I.—Contentment with God's Gifts. 5-6.
II.—Faith in the Unchanging Christ. 7-8.
III.—Stability in Holy Doctrine. 9-10.
IV.—Patience in enduring Reproach. 11-14.
V.—Ceaseless Sacrifice of Praise. 15.
VI.—Pleasure in Doing Good Continually. 16.
VII.—The Repose of Humility, in Subjection to Authority. 17-18.

Here we have the Heart's Quietude, Stay, Rock, Patience, Incense, Service, and Surrender. What lessons on the secrets of an undisturbed calm and peace! No worry about daily wants; no hesitation about trusting in Jesus; no uncertainty about truth; no shrinking from the cross; no unthankfulness for mercies; no idleness in service; no rebellion against authority. There can be no such outgo toward God and man unless there be first the income of a Divine Spirit. We must know God, and be able to say "The Lord is my Helper."

The Threefold Leaven

"Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees and of Herod."—*Matthew xvi.* 6; *Mark viii.* 15.

By combining these two texts we get the full warning. The leaven of the Pharisees was *Formalism,* which often degenerated into hypocrisy. The leaven of the Sad-

ducees was *Rationalism*: they were the sceptics and agnostics of the Jewish community. The leaven of the Herodians was *Secularism*, the spirit of the world, that especially caters to the powers that be, seeking worldly supremacy and advantage.

This warning is one for all time, and is all-embracing. If there be any leaven that especially betrays the influence of the *flesh*, it is formalism and Ritualism, whereby one is lulled into a false security by an outward conformity to religious rites and usages, while these are but the polite disguises of fleshly indulgences and a carnal spirit. If in any leaven the subtlety of *Satan* is particularly to be detected, it is in Rationalism, which questions and even denies revealed truth, and substitutes human reason for Divine revelation. And obviously what constitutes Secularism is the spirit of the *World*, with its honours and dignities, wealth and power—the great snare of spirituality.

Here, then, indirectly, the Lord bids us take heed and beware of the influence of the world, the flesh and the Devil.

I.—The Three-fold Leaven, all-comprehensive.

II.—Its relations to our three-fold foe.

III.—Its subtle method of working—permeating the whole lump.

IV.—Its assimilative power—making the whole lump like itself.

Law and Grace

"For ye are not under the Law, but under Grace."—*Romans vi.* 14.

THIS does not mean a difference of *historic* dispensations, as though Old Testament saints and New Testament saints were saved on different principles: one by

works, the other by faith. Paul, both to Romans and Galatians, cites Abraham as father of the faithful—of all who are justified by faith. (Romans iv., Gal. iii.)

These ten words state a universal fact, that with all believers God deals not *legally,* but *graciously,* under a system in which Grace is the determining principle. Only thus can Justification, Sanctification, or Service be understood. Legal notions and spirit are a bar alike to all peace and progress. To look to the Law for help is to fall from Grace to a lower level.

The utter contrariety of the two principles appears in such particulars as the following:—

I.—The province of Law is to command. It is authoritative. The province of Grace is to enable. It is vitalising.

II.—Law requires of us perfect obedience, in order to acceptance; Grace provides for us a perfect obedience, acceptance in Christ.

III.—Law, by its very perfection, lays on us burdens of duty; Grace interposes to lift our burdens and bear them for us.

IV.—Law has no room for pardon, but must exact penalty; Grace remits penalty, and offers abundant pardon.

V.—Law can recognise only desert, and pays wages; Grace has no reference to desert, and bestows gifts.

VI.—Law, therefore, brings the sinner into utter despair; Grace inspires hope, even in the most hopeless.

VII.—Law cannot change character; it has no transforming power. Grace undertakes to make a sinner a "new creation."

How melancholy is the fact, therefore, that many who, in justification, learned to look unto Christ and be saved, should afterward look to themselves for sanctification, and, instead of standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free, be again entangled in a yoke of bondage!

The Christian's Inventory

"All are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."—1 *Cor. iii. 22-23.*

Here nine possessions are enumerated, but they belong to four classes: Paul, Apollos, Cephas (Peter), as representative preachers and teachers, may stand for the *whole body of the ministry* of the Church; the world is all inclusive of the *whole temporal order* (κοσμος, the most comprehensive of the terms, translated "world"). Life and Death belong together as embracing *all human history.* Things present and to come include *all duration,* both temporal and eternal. Thus we are here told that all spiritual teachers and ministers, the whole creative order, the entire experience of our mortal career, and the whole succession of events in time and eternity, are made to serve the highest interests of a child of God.

Then the *basis* of this universal possession is declared to be this; that the believer is by faith linked indissolubly with Christ, even as Christ is with God! There is thus a golden chain with three links: first, that which links God with all things; next, the link which unites God with Christ; and third, the link between Christ and the believer. Thus, through his vital connection with Christ, and Christ's with God, the humblest regenerate soul becomes, with the Godhead, joint proprietor and possessor of all things.

This suggests:

I.—The Comprehensiveness of the Inventory.

II.—The Ground of Possession in Christ.

III.—The Infinite Grace of the Endowment.

IV.—The Inevitable Conclusion: "Let no man glory in men."

The Faithful God

"Know, therefore, that Jehovah, thy God, He is the Faithful God."—*Deuteronomy vii. 9.*

Here for the first time appears that new name of God, The Faithful One. Beautifully is this word framed—*faith-ful*—to remind that He is the natural and perfect object for faith fully to find its ground of rest and trust; and that He keeps faith with us in all His covenant promises and obligations.

God's faithfulness combines in itself at least six other attributes, like a dome surmounting and crowning a structure, and supported on six pillars: namely: His *Truth,* which makes it impossible for Him either to be false or faithless; His *Righteousness,* which makes Him infinitely sensitive to any obligation that He assumes; His *Power,* which is the eternal guaranty of His ability to do as He promises; His *Love,* which assures us of His tender sympathy for all our needs; His *Omniscience,* which devises such wise methods for working out His gracious ends; and His *Unchangeableness,* which forbids any forgetfulness of His promises, or alteration in His plans.

Careful study of the Word of God will reveal at least seven forms in which stress is laid upon His Faithfulness:

I.—As a *Pardoner.* (1 John i. 9.) Faithful and just to forgive, and cleanse those who confess and forsake their sins. (Proverbs xxviii. 13.) He was under no obligation to forgive till He had promised. Then faithfulness to His word was at stake. Comp. Hebrews ii. 17.

II.—As a *Protector.* (1 Corinth. x. 13.) God is Faithful in Protecting the tempted soul, making a way to escape, that sin may not be irresistible. If there were no possibility of escape, would not the sinner become irresponsible? But God opens the door of flight.

III.—As a *Provider.* This thought abounds especially in the Psalms. Comp. xcii. 2 and Lamentations iii. 23. Every night and every morning we may find proofs of his faithful provision for us—in waking and sleeping hours alike. (Genesis xxii. 14.) One of God's titles, Jehovah the Provider.

IV.—As a *Promiser.* (Hebrews x. 23.) He is faithful that promised. (xi. 11.) She judged Him faithful who had promised. The former text reveals His faithfulness, and the latter, faith as counting upon it. These are two beautiful companion texts.

V.—As a *Purifier.* (1 Thess. v. 24.) The reference here is to the sanctifying work of the Faithful God, who calls us to Holiness, and also will purify us from all iniquity. Comp. 1 Peter iv. 19 where He is called the Faithful *Creator,* perhaps because He has such skill in adapting the means to the ends.

VI.—As a *Preserver.* (1 Corinth. i. 8, 9.) Here His faithfulness appears in confirming the believer unto the end. (2 Thess. iii. 3.) Here similarly, in establishing us and keeping us from all evil. Having begun a good work, He faithfully perfects it.

VII.—As a *Performer.* (Romans iv. 21.) Abraham was fully persuaded that what He had promised He was able also to perform. The emphatic word is *perform.* The contrast is between *saying* and *doing,* and in this case the doing involved a miracle.

Mark xi. 22 may be freely rendered *Reckon on God's good faith.* (2 Timothy ii. 13.) If we believe not (are faithless), yet He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself. (Micah vii. 20.) What was covenant *mercy* to Abraham became *truth* to Isaac. God was not bound to extend mercy to Abraham's seed until He had entered into covenant. Then what was at first Mercy became Truth.

The Leadership of a Child

"And a little child shall lead them."—*Isaiah xi.* 6.

The primary reference here is, of course, to God's own "little child" and his millennial reign. He is the human offshoot of Jesse's stem, on whom rests the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord, and who subdues even the most violent and intractable natures.

But there is a deeper thought here of wider application, and it may be expressed in three forms:—

I.—The child-days lead, form, and fix the future history and destiny.

II.—The child-traits lead the way in all virtues of character.

III.—The child-spirit leads in influence upon human society.

First, as to child-days. "The child is father to the man." Samuel was established *to be* a prophet of the Lord, while yet a child. Luther's schoolmaster, John Trebonius, used to doff his cap to the boys because he saw in them the future burgomasters and chancellors.

Second, as the child-traits. There are four characteristic qualities of childhood about which all the virtues cluster. *Truth,* centre of simplicity and sincerity; *Faith,* akin to humility and docility; *Hope,* inspiring cheerfulness and aspiration; and *Love,* fountain of impartiality and generosity.

Third, as to child-spirit. It subdues even the most cruel, stubborn, and violent natures. Hence here the reference to the rapacious wolf, the treacherous and ferocious leopard, and the cruel and violent lion—all of them led by the little child.

A few practical inferences are helpful:—

1. We must not despise childhood's golden opportunities. They can never be recalled if wasted.

2. We need to carry forward into manhood and old age the childlike traits, cultivating and guarding them.

3. It is simplicity, not subtlety, whereby the greatest power is ultimately wielded over men.

4. True greatness consists in genuineness and generosity, the union of perfect sincerity and magnanimity.

5. Hence rank in the Kingdom of Heaven depends upon the measure of holy childlikeness.

6. Hence, also, the grand epoch for securing conversion to God is that of childhood, perhaps much earlier than we think.

7. The Church that is not God's nursery for young *plants* will find few flourishing *trees* for her courts.

The First Great Thing

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." *Matt. vi.* 33; comp. *Philip iii.* 13-14.

TAKEN together, these teach us one of the supreme lessons of God.

"But be seeking first the kingdom and its righteousness;
And all these things shall be added unto you."

"One thing, however!
The things beyond forgetting,
And the things before eagerly reaching out unto,
With the goal in view,
I PRESS ON!
For the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus."

I.—The Command.—These are strictly parallel passages. They teach essentially the same lesson. There is but *one thing to be put first;* all else is to be secondary and subordinate; and, in fact, so thoroughly secondary and subordinate as to be practically lost to view. The word "behind" means not only of the *past,*

but what is voluntarily *left* behind as something unworthy of a disciple—what has been counted loss and dung for Christ.

This saying of Christ teaches us what is to be habitually sought first. Be constantly seeking—a continuous present—the Kingdom and Righteousness of God. In other words, to *be* holy and to *make* holy. Righteousness for oneself, the spread of the Kingdom in the conquest of others. This may be the "*high*" or *upward* calling. The calling is holiness; the upward calling is usefulness in making others holy. The first marks a goal, the other a prize.

II.—The Promise.—"When the great bargain is concluded before God, between God and the soul of man, He throws in the good and needful things of this life as unworthy of mention in so great a transaction."—Dr. Mark Hopkins.

God's principle of dealing is this: When we put first what belongs first, He adds the secondary to the primary, without our seeking the lesser good; but when we put first what belongs second, we forfeit the primary altogether, and we have not even the assurance of the secondary, for there is no promise ever given of secondary good except when kept in its normal relation to the primary. Comp. 1 Kings iii. 9-14.

The Unseen World

"We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen."—*2 Cor. iv.* 18.

Five golden thoughts are in this paragraph, verses 16-18:—

I.—There is a *world* of the unseen. Here are the highest verities and realities. Gen. i. 1: "In the beginning God." The Invisible God, infinitely greater than all He

made. The things no sense can perceive are the great things. No force is visible. We can see *phenomena*, but not their *cause*. Gravitation, light, and heat, electricity, and magnetism; all these are invisible. *Life* no man ever saw, nor thought, nor desire, nor love.

II.—There is a *sense* of the unseen. Heb. v. 14. "We look," &c. Imagination is the sense of the invisible. Memory is the sense of a vanished past; Hope, of an unseen future; Reason, of truth; Conscience, of right and wrong. These senses may be cultivated and exercised, so as to become far more acute and keen of perception; or dulled and blunted and seared into insensibility.

III.—There is an *experience* of the unseen. "We walk," &c. Holy men and women have lived in the unseen world and walked with the unseen God. *E.g.*, Pastor Gossner and his mission work—"Ringing only the prayer bell"; George Muller, Hudson Taylor, Quarrier, etc.

IV.—There is an *effect* of the unseen upon the *seer*. "The inward man is renewed." The tendency of things seen is to exalt the carnal. God gives us the Sabbath to exercise our spiritual senses; so, of the Word of God, to introduce us into hidden mysteries; Prayer, to acquaint us with an unseen God. "Moses endured as seeing Him who is invisible."

V.—There is an *effect* of the unseen upon the *seen*. Our affliction, however heavy, becomes light in comparison with the eternal weight of glory. Our habit ought to be to weigh every experience in God's scales, where earthly things weigh light, and heavenly things heavy. Then we should reverse many of our present judgments, and learn to give things their true value.

Maxims:

1. The only things in the universe that can work harm to us or good for us are the unseen forces. Nothing material, visible, tangible, is to be dreaded, nor can it be

utilised largely. It is the unseen forces, that lie behind phenomena, that alone represent Power.

2. Our most valued *senses* are not the five physical, but the five spiritual: Reason, the sense of truth; Conscience, the sense of right; Imagination, the sense of the invisible; Memory, the sense of the past; Sensibility, the sense of the morally beautiful.

3. All true estimates depend on comparison. We must learn to measure and weigh by God's own standards. Worldly things put in heaven's scales weigh light; heavenly things in worldly scales weigh light—but the latter is a false estimate.

4. The disciple of Christ is one who lives, sees, walks, in the unseen world. There alone faith reaches her greatest triumphs. And for the sake of our discipline in the power of seeing invisible things, God often constrains us to walk by faith when sight no longer avails.

The Heavenly Vision

"Whereupon . . . I was not disobedient unto the Heavenly Vision."—*Acts xxvi.* 19.

THE conversion of Saul of Tarsus has a threefold detailed narration in the Acts of the Apostles: ix. 1-22; xxii. 21; xxvi. 1-20. This repetition is designed for emphasis, and for the valuable lessons suggested. Let us select six:—

I.—A VISION. Every man has his Damascus. God reveals to him at some time, and in some way, truth which, if followed, brings new light. All depends on how the light is used. Even the heathen are not left without light. Comp. Rom. i. 18-32; Acts xiv. 17. How God deals with those who seek to follow light is shown in Acts viii. 26-40 and x. 1-6.

II. A DECISION. Two questions only were asked by

Paul: "Who art Thou?" "What wilt Thou?" Henceforth immediate and implicit obedience at any cost. "Thy will be done." Such a decision turns the crisis of history and destiny, and is the soul of faith and love.

III.—A Mission. God sent him to serve and to witness. As to service, it was to open eyes, and turn feet into new paths. As to witness, it was to expand with new experience. Even yet through his fourteen epistles Paul is serving and witnessing.

IV.—The Power of Grace. Here is a moral miracle—an immediate transformation of conduct and character. The stress is upon immediateness: "Forthwith, straightway." A radical revolution possible only to God.

V.—A Pattern of Salvation. Comp. 1 Tim. i. 14-16. It exemplifies two grand facts:—

(1) There is no limit to forgiveness when there is penitence and faith.

(2) There is no limit to serviceableness when there is full surrender.

VI.—A Proof of Christ's Resurrection. Gilbert West and Lord Lyttleton planned an assault on the fortress of our faith; but, in the studies of the New Testament necessary to discover the weak points, they came upon Saul's conversion and concluded it was unaccountable except on the supposition of an actual vision of the Risen Redeemer, and both of them became defenders of the faith they had proposed to destroy.

Limiting God by Unbelief

"Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel."—*Psalm lxxviii.* 41.

Introduction, 1-9. The Psalm proper begins at verse 10, and extends to 72—sixty-two verses. Midway is the 41st, which is thus the centre of the Psalm and of its les-

sons. Here it is charged against Israelites that they "provoked God in the wilderness and grieved him in the desert"; that they turned back and tempted Him and *limited*—set limits to—the Holy One of Israel, and that they remembered not His hand. For illustration of this, comp. Exod. xvii. and Numb. xxi. 1-10, and Heb. iii. 7 to iv. 11, which last is the New Testament commentary on these Old Testament transactions.

These LIMITATIONS, set upon God by unbelief, were manifestly two:—

I.—They limited God in their *conceptions* of His power—of what He was and could do.

II.—They limited God in the *exercise* of His power—His *practical ability* to do—by their limited capacity to receive blessing.

The Psalm teaches us that these limitations were set principally by *three* means:—

I.—By *Forgetfulness.* They forgat His works and wonders (11).

II.—By *Lawlessness.* They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in His law (10).

III.—By *Faithlessness.* They believed not in God, and trusted not in His salvation (22).

These three specifications complete the analysis of the Psalm's contents and explain all its teachings.

The *philosophy* of limitation is equally plain and easy to be understood.

Forgetfulness limits God by making us unmindful and unthankful. All the records of the past are meant as an argument to faith and a rebuke to discouragement. But when His past mercies are forgotten all the inspiration furnished by experience is lost.

Lawlessness limits God by the disobedience of heart and will, which constantly challenges punishment instead of blessing. How can God in self-consistency continue to bestow favour upon the rebellious? This would be to set a premium upon disobedience.

Faithlessness limits God by shutting the doors to the incoming of blessing. Much of the highest good depends upon our power to receive. "The light of the body is the eye"—because all the light of day would not illumine an eyeless man. Faith is capacity to perceive and receive; and without it there can be no taking of God's gifts.

Thus the limits set upon God are three; a treacherous memory, a rebellious will, and an unbelieving heart. Where these exist in us, it is like going to war against a powerful enemy, with an empty *treasury,* with no *allies,* and no *weapons.*

The Worldly Choice

"They all . . . began to make excuse."—*Luke xiv.* 18-20.

As F. S. Arnot, of Garenganze fame, thoughtfully remarks, the lesson, here suggested, of the awful danger of a rejection of God's grace for the sake of worldly gain, occupation, and companionship, is enforced in the four or five chapters that follow:—

Luke xv. The prodigal son is reduced by such rejection to utter beggary, but happily repents in season.

Luke xvi. The rich man enjoys his worldly choice and is prosperous in this world, but in the life to come is a hopeless beggar.

Luke xvii. The Lord foretells how such trifling treatment of grace will go on to the end of the age and issue in eternal disaster.

Luke xviii. The Pharisee and Publican suggest how, on one hand, under outward propriety of religion, such rejection may hide; and how, on the other hand, under outward sin and the life of an outcast, may be found a heart penitent and justified.

Perhaps the rich young ruler in chapter xviii. is an example of the Pharisee; and Zacchæus, in Chapter xix., of the publican.

This outline may profitably be expanded: the theme being—THE UNANIMOUS TRIFLING.

Comp. Matt. xxii. 2, "made light of it." Three leading excuses: Purchase of land, preoccupation, association. The special lesson is the power of worldly greed, worldly toil, and worldly ties, to lead men to make light of God's salvation, the chapters following illustrating the folly of such a course:—

Luke xv. 13-16. A human soul brought down by such choice to the lowest beggary and want *in this life.* The "great supper" is here set forth as full provision in the Father's House. From this wretched destitution, however, there is a repentance and return.

xvi. 19-26. A prosperous sinner, who goes to his farm and merchandise, and, perhaps, to his wedded wife, grows rich and prosperous, but in this life receives his good things, and in the next is poor indeed. *Per contra* a beggar in this world, who belongs to God, has his place, after death, at the heavenly banquet. This parable thus lifts the veil, and shows us things *beyond this life.*

xvii. 26-33. Prophecy of Christ that thus it will be *even to the coming of the Son of Man.* Note the emphasis on buying and selling, planting and building, and marrying, until the flood came, and again, until the Son of Man comes.

xviii. 9-14. In the case of the Pharisee there is not an open and apparent refusal of God's invitation, but an outward acceptance, with a real forfeiture; while the publican, who was despised and considered an outcast, was the real partaker.

xviii. 27. The rich young ruler, not a sinner outwardly, but held fast by love of money and going away sorrowful—a proud Pharisee.

xix. 1-10. Finally we have a publican and prosperous

sinner, like Dives, but who, before too late, renounced worldly wealth and dependence for discipleship.

Taking these altogether:—

Sinners Rejecting God's Grace for the World.

Then—

Example of Being Reduced to Beggary, and Repenting and Returning.

Example of Worldly Prosperity, and Hopeless Beggary Beyond.

Example of Unconscious Beggary and Outward Propriety, etc.

Example of Riches and Morality, and yet Rejection of Grace.

Example of Riches and Wrongdoing, and yet Acceptance of Grace.

This is an example of the effect of studying divine truth *in its connection.* Many additional beauties appear when we look at each lesson only as a link in a chain, each link diverse from the others, yet connected with the rest. Matthew's gospel is the gospel of *Salvation,* and from beginning to end presents the phases of that great theme.

The Carnal and Spiritual Man

"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ."—1 *Cor. iii.* 1.

The Carnal Man is marked by seven features:—

I.—He is carnally minded. Rom. viii. 5-7.

II.—He is carnally limited. 1 Cor. iii. 1.

III.—He is carnally weak. 1 Cor. iii. 2.

IV.—He is carnally bound, enslaved. Rom. vii. 14.

V.—He is carnally disposed. 1 Cor. iii. 3, 4.

VI.—He is carnally opposed to God. Rom. viii. 7.

VII.—He is carnally doomed. Gal. vi. 8.

The Spiritual Man:—

I.—He is spiritually born. John iii. 6.

II.—He is spiritually led and taught. 1 Cor. ii. 10-12; Rom. viii. 14.

III.—He is spiritually minded. Rom. viii. 5, 6.

IV.—He is spiritually renewed. Eph. iv. 23.

V. He is spiritually sealed. Eph. i. 13.

VI.—He is spiritually filled. Eph. v. 18.

VII. He is spiritually freed. Rom. viii. 2.

Marks of a True Church

"We are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." —*Philippians iii.* 3.

HERE seems to be an occult reference to the Trinity. Worship of God the Father, rejoicing in Christ the Son, and having confidence only in the Holy Spirit.

These are the marks of a circumcised or separated people:—

1. *Spirituality* of Worship, in contrast to formalism, ritualism, and estheticism.

2. *Satisfaction in Christ Jesus,* as opposed to secularism, worldliness.

3. *Dependence on the Holy Spirit* instead of fleshly energy and works.

They seem also to belong in this *order* also; for one of the first lessons is that of real devout communion with God. (Matt. vi. 6.) Nothing is more necessary as laying true foundations for godly living. It enables us to practice the presence of God, and hallows all honest and honourable toil, making it a divine vocation. Then we need to have Christ revealed to us within as an indwelling life and power. The sense of nearness and dearness to Him—"My Beloved is mine"—causes ecstasy. The soul,

enamoured of Him, feels no more the charm of lesser things. Comp. Paul in this very chapter. And then we learn a third lesson, that the flesh—the carnal nature—is incapable of anything spiritual—of holy affections or activities. We become watchful against the energies of the flesh, lest they displace those of the Spirit.

All Need Supplied

"My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."—*Philippians iv.* 19.

THIS verse must be studied in its position at the end of this great Epistle of Renunciations and Compensations. Here the believer is seen emptying himself for Christ's sake of all that he had counted gain to himself. He is therefore reduced to a voluntary condition of absolute poverty and dependence.

And now what is he to do? Abandon himself in his destitution to the Father in Heaven, and repose absolutely in His love and care.

This final chapter is the summing up of the whole practical argument. Do not abandon yourself to God until you are persuaded both of His power and love; but, having done so, do seven other things:—

I. Being in the Lord, as your new sphere of being, REJOICE ALWAY (4).

II. Be calm and patient under all provocation. He is always NEXT you (5).

III. Banish all care and anxious thought. Pray and praise (6, 7).

IV. Keep your thoughts on Divine Themes, not on worldly trifles (8).

V. Discipline yourself to contentment with any state He appoints (11).

VI. Be confident in His strength as perfected in your weakness (12).

VII. Cast yourself on Him for the supply of every need (19).

The last thought is the contrast of our need with His supply; our poverty in humiliation with His riches in glory; our little wants with His great riches.

God's Olive Tree

"The Lord hath called thy name, A Green Olive Tree."—*Jeremiah xi.* 16.

HERE we are definitely told that Jehovah has given this name to His people (comp. Psa. lii. 8, Romans xi. 17, etc). When God gives a name it means correspondence with character, conduct, history, destiny. In the Bible *Name* is the nearest equivalent of *Nature.*

There are at least ten particulars in which this name fits into the facts of Hebrew history:

1. The ROOT. Abram and patriarchs.
2. The SOIL. Canaan, in which planted by God.
3. The BRANCHES. Isreal and Judah, with minuter ramifications.
4. The FATNESS. Privileges: the Law, Oracles of God, Tabernacle, Oil of Spirit, &c.
5. The FRUIT. Consummate bloom—Messiah.
6. The EXCISION. Branches cut off on account of unbelief.
7. The GRAFT. Believing Gentiles grafted in, in their room.
8. The RE-GRAFT. Excised branches ultimately restored.
9. The HUSBANDMAN. God Himself.
10. The FINAL GLORY. Flourishing, faithful, fruitful, &c. (comp. Romans xi.).

Knowing the Name of God

"They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee."—*Psalm ix.* 10.

HERE again, the name, being the nature, it stands for the Person, the character. Man's name is often the exact opposite of himself, but God's names are revelations of God. Hence the meaning here is that a true knowledge of God's nature or character as revealed in His chosen names and titles leads to involuntary trust in Him. This is the way both to inspire and increase faith. There are two ways in which men seek more trust in God. One—the false way—is to fix attention on the *faith,* trying thus to quicken confidence in Him. The other way—the only true way—is to fix the eye on *God* as the object of faith. If we learn what sort of a God He is, we shall, even without effort, put in Him our trust. He will draw out our affection and confidence if we really know and understand Him. Trust is from the same root as truth—true, truer, truest—trust. It is repose upon God's truth. Faith rests on His faithfulness. Hence the more we know of His truth and faithfulness the more perfectly do we rest and repose upon them. Trust is the response to His attraction, but we need to come within the range of that attraction. His Word He has magnified above all His name as the grand mirror of Himself. Having the written and living Word together, we have no reason to ask, "Show us the Father." In the Scriptures and in the Lord Jesus Christ we have a complete exhibition of God's Being.

It is worth while to study God's *names* as found in the Scriptures. They are numerous, but significant. Some of them indicate His natural, others His moral, attributes, and there appears to be a progress of doctrine from beginning to end. Observe the three main words in this verse—NAME, KNOW, TRUST.

Take as basis for this study the following names of God:—

ALMIGHTY GOD. Gen. xvii. 1. *Power* first, because without this He could do nothing for the trusting soul. In Abram's case it was Creative Power, giving Isaac after the age of childbearing, quickening Sarah's dead womb (Rom. iv. 17-21.).

JEHOVAH. Exodus iii. 13-15, vi. 3. *Eternity* seems to be the leading thought in that untranslatable word, which represents at once the past, present, and future of the verb, to be, and expresses the idea of an eternal present—*I AM,* the Living One, Fountain of Life, and for ever the same. Hence to be trusted as the covenant God. (Comp. Exod. xxxiv. 5-7.)

HOLY, FATHER, REDEEMER. Isaiah lvii. 15, lxiii. 16, lxiv. 8, lxvi. 1, 2. Isaiah is specially rich in Divine names and titles. Here we have names expressing God's Holiness, Fatherhood, and Redemptive relation. We are in the department of moral attributes and His relation to men in grace. What an inspiration to our faith!

LIGHT, LOVE. 1 John i. 5, iv. 8. Taken together with Jehovah, in which the great thought is *Life;* we have God as Life—the essence of all being; Light, the essence of all intellectual excellence; Love, the sum of all moral excellence. Such a God we must trust. He has and is Power infinite, and Eternal Life; He is Holy, yet gracious, a Father and Redeemer. He has and is infinite Light and Love, and cannot err through ignorance or malice. He is the perfect object of trust and faith. (Comp. John xvii. 3.) This is Life Eternal that they might know Thee, the only TRUE GOD.

Gideon and the Fleece

"Behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the floor," etc.—*Judges vi.* 36-40.

NOTE: "If Thou art about to bring salvation by my hand," then two signs: First, that the fleece should be

drenched when all about was *dry;* second, that the fleece should be *dry* when all about was *drenched.*

Typical of two opposite experiences in the spiritual life: that God's messenger to men shall be receptive where others are rejective; and the reverse; alive to God, dead to the world, loving what the world hates, hating what the world loves. This may be illustrated:—

1. The *Scriptures,* spread out before God as my fleece, to be saturated with a new sense and meaning from on high. Then I become alive and keen to all the Lord's interpretations and heedless of human opinions, &c.

2. *Prayer.* A preparation for Prayer (Matt. vi. 6). Spreading out one's whole being as a fleece to get filled with the Presence of God. (Jer. Taylor, *Holy Living,* Rule III.). Thus I become alive to the Spirit's yearnings, and indifferent to carnal lusts.

3. *Ministry.* Spreading out my work to get it saturated with the new quality, unction, passion for souls. Indifferent to praise and censure of men, and alive to God's enduement. Speak truth in love.

4. *Heart*—as source of affection—spread out to get charged with holy affections and desires, and weaned from objects of lust. Learn to be renewed in the spirit of the mind (Eph. iv. 23).

Daniel in Babylon

One of the most remarkable figures in all sacred history. A man declared by the angel Gabriel to be "greatly beloved of God," and, as nearly as we can discover, without fault or inconsistency, so far as the record goes.

It is worth while to search and find what in him made him so beautiful in character and conduct and so greatly beloved of God.

There are four conspicuous crises in the narrative which may reveal the secrets of his excellence:—

1. Daniel and the king's *wine* (i. 8-16).
2. Daniel and the king's *dream* (ii. 16-49, iv. 18-27).
3. Daniel and the king's *crime* (v. 13-23).
4. Daniel and the king's *decree* (vi. 10-23).

The first reveals his self-control; the second his power in prayer; the third his heroic courage and fidelity to man; and the fourth his loyalty of heart toward God.

Delight in God's Will

"I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart."—*Psalm xl.* 8.

THREE simple and suggestive subdivisions:—

1. The will of God—the one perfect standard for all conduct.
2. Doing the will of God—the comprehensive description of service.
3. Delight in doing God's will—the supreme height of blessedness.

God's Love: its Nature

"God is Love," etc.—1 *John iv.* 8-16.

1. LOVE is a divine law, a principle of self-sacrifice.
2. Love alone makes possible a purely unselfish benevolence.
3. Love is in operation impartial and universal.
4. Love is inexhaustible, reacting to enrich the giver.
5. Love is gracious, unconstrained, and spontaneous.
6. Love is unconditional in bestowment.
7. Love hesitates at no sacrifice.

Vigilance and its Reward

"Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not."—*Luke xii.* 40; comp. 37-48.

1. VIGILANCE is most acceptable to God. No condescension is too great from the Master toward a watchful servant. He, the host, becomes as a slave, girding Himself, and waiting on such servants as guests.

2. Vigilance is most commendable when watchfulness is most difficult. The second watch (9-12 P. M.) and the third (12-3 A. M.) are times when sleep is most natural and hardest to shake off.

3. Vigilance is specially needful in view of the thief and the uncertainty of his time. He will seek to break through and rob the house of its richest treasures when we are most likely to be off guard.

4. Vigilance is demanded in view of the certainty of the Lord's coming and the uncertainty of its time and manner, and the risk of being unready.

5. Vigilance is needful in view of the stewardship and the account which will be required of what is held in trust.

Here are five reasons for vigilance:—

(*a*) The peculiar danger of sleep.
(*b*) The thief's possible coming.
(*c*) The Lord's certain coming.
(*d*) The loss of opportunity, and
(*e*) The forfeiture of reward.

God's Thoughts and God's Word

"My thoughts are not as your thoughts."
"My word shall not return to me void."
—*Isaiah lv.* 8-13.

HERE is a crystal of divine thought (verses 6 to 13) and one of the most significant passages of Old Testament Scripture.

The central conception: The infinitely higher plane of God's thought: Mysterious, paradoxical ways of working, especially applied to conceptions and methods of salvation. To this is added a divine promise which is a challenge:

"My Word—that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void"—empty of result. "It shall accomplish that which I please"—my pleasure. "It shall prosper in the mission whereto I sent it"—its mission, compared to rain and snow, descending from heaven, returning not in vapour until first the earth has been watered and fructified, yielding bread for hunger, seed for harvest.

Instead of thorns and briars the fir and myrtle grow. This result shall be to the Lord—for a name or fame—an "everlasting sign."

I.—God's Word is attested by its divine ideas.

II.—God's Word works in contrahuman and superhuman ways.

III.—God's Word has a divine mission.

IV.—God's Word works a perpetual moral miracle.

Two grand suggestions:

1. The theoretic perfection of the Gospel.
2. The dynamic power of the Gospel.

A few unique features of the Gospel might be selected as central: such as the idea of the God-man, representative man, standing for:

1. The whole race.
2. The whole church.

Involving:

(*a*) A sinless man made sin for sinners.
(*b*) A deathless man dying that we might live.
(*c*) Justification by faith alone.
(*d*) God seeking man *versus* man seeking God.
(*e*) A new birth from above.
(*f*) Every believer a witness.
(*g*) Salvation of free grace not of merit.

The Teaching of Types

"But Christ being come, an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect Tabernacle, not made with hands."—*Hebrews ix.* 11.

THIS is one of the many cases of *authorised types,* that is to say, where we are not left to find by our own ingenuity a typical meaning in the events, persons and object lessons of Scripture, but the Word of God is its own interpreter. Here we are taught to see in Aaron the first High Priest, and in the Tabernacle which Moses reared according to God's perfect pattern, a foreshadowing of Christ and His work.

I.—In the High Priest's *attire,* for example, were three very conspicuous peculiarities, which may be selected out of many:

1. The Holy Crown.

2. The Onyx Stones and (3) Stones of the Breastplate. (Exod. xxviii. 9-29, 36-38.)

In the Holy Crown, all else in the High Priest's attire seems to culminate. It was bound upon the forefront of the mitre, and was the most conspicuous feature of his dress, bearing an engraving, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And it is particularly told us why it is to be always upon his forehead, that he may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the Children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and always upon *his* forehead that *they* may be accepted before the Lord.

Almost as prominent in this description is the fact of the two onyx stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial, and the twelve precious stones in the breastplate. Both the onyx stones and the breastplate gems bear on them the names of the Children of Israel; in one case collectively, six on each; in the other individually, one on each.

It is noticeable that in the Bible the shoulders, being the place of burden-bearing, represent strength or power —and the breast, as the place of physical weakness, but of the heart, representing love. It is easy to see why Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, offers two prayers: in the first that we may know God's *Power* in Christ, and in the second that we may comprehend His *Love;* and in this second case we have breadth and length, depth and height—as in the solid foursquare breastplate.

Let us learn:

1. Our acceptance before the Lord on the ground of the *Holiness* of the Lord Jesus.

2. Our dependence upon His Almighty *Power* to sustain and support, and His Infinite *Love* to nourish and cherish.

II.—And now we turn to Christ as the *Minister at a greater and more perfect Tabernacle,* not of human building.

The conspicuous facts and features about the Tabernacle were *three courts,* and *seven articles of furniture*: in the first court, open to all, the Brazen Altar of Sacrifice and the Laver; in the second court, the Holy Place, within the first veil, the Table of Shewbread, the Golden Candlestick, and the Golden Altar of Incense; then, beyond the second veil, the Holiest of All with the Ark and Mercy Seat.

The outer court manifestly suggests the TERMS of *Communion* with God; the Holy Place, the FORMS of *Communion;* and the Holiest of All, the IDEAL AND GOAL of *such Communion.* The whole building, together, typically represents the *path of approach to the Divine Presence:* Its *starting point and its end.* Here a sinner may learn, if he will, how to come near to God.

1. As to the *Terms* of such approach: he must come by way of the Brazen Altar and Laver—the blood of Reconciliation and the washing of Regeneration. He

needs, first, expiation of guilt, and, secondly, a renewal of his whole nature.

2. Then he is prepared to enter within the first veil; into the department of *Service.* The forms of Holy Fellowship are *three*: Dedication of Substance to God, Witness to the Truth, and Prayer—supplication and intercession—in other words, *Giving, Living, and Praying.* This, as the department of *Service*, is veiled off from the outer court, and no one can enter here except by way of the Altar and Laver.

It is noticeable that the Golden Altar is nearer the Holy of Holies than either the Table or Candlestick, possibly suggesting that Praying in the Holy Ghost is the most exalted form of service.

3. Within the second veil we confront only the Ark and Mercy Seat. These suggest the *ideal* of Communion, when, abiding in Christ habitually, we are brought into absolute nearness to God and union with him. Christ as typified by the unbroken Tables in the Ark, becomes our *Obedience;* and is our Mercy Seat, or *Meeting Place* with God, in whom Communion is perfected.

The Strait Gate and Narrow Way

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat;

"Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."—*Matt. vii.* 13, 14.

Most significant teaching. The modern tendency is to *breadth*—to a false charity that covers a multitude of doctrinal and practical sins. Christ's uniform teaching is what modern liberalism would call "narrow and intolerant." This passage—which is one of the keys of the Sermon on the Mount—teaches that:

I.—All triumph is reached through difficulty.

II.—The highest truth is always with the minority.

III.—The multitude naturally avoid hard paths.

The whole sermon gives us several grand illustrations of the fact that every highest good is reached through a strait gate:

1. vii. 13, 14. The strait gate that leads to eternal life.

2. vi. 6. The strait gate that leads to the audience-chamber of God: only one can go in at a time.

3. vi. 33. The strait gate that leads to service: Only one thing is to be put before us—forever the first.

4. vii. 24-27. The strait gate that leads to final and eternal success—only one foundation. "These sayings of Mine"—all else, sand.

The Book with Seven Seals

"A book . . . sealed with seven Seals," etc.—Rev. v.

This is a most notable chapter, and unique as showing *God's Opinion of His own Book;* for even if the scroll, here referred to, be only the Apocalypse itself, what is true of a *part* of God's Word is true of the *whole.* Scanning the whole chapter we see:

I.—The unparalleled *majesty of the Scriptures.* No created intelligence, even though angelic, worthy to open the seals, take the scroll in hand or even to look upon it.

II.—The inviolable *mystery* of the Scriptures—sealed up with sevenfold secrecy, apart from the one and only interpreting Power.

III.—The inseparable *unity* of the Book and the Lamb—the written Word and the living Word. He only is worthy to take the scroll or capable of unloosing the seals.

IV.—The complex *character* of the *person of Christ* —Lion and Lamb in one, King and Priest. Hence able to make us kings and priests.

V.—The *solvent power of the blood* of Christ, which alone unlooses the seals and interprets the contents. Two thoughts pervade the Word—Priesthood and Kingship—and the Lamb and the Lion explain both.

The Verifying Faculty

"The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

"But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"—*Matt. vi. 22, 23.*

"If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."—1 *Cor. xiv. 37.*

By the verifying faculty is meant that which in us makes the light of truth available. There are certain conditions which alone make possible the perception and reception of truth, as the eye makes possible the reception of light.

I.—Reason. Its office is to weigh truth and falsehood, and decide according to *rational* evidence. Hence are needed in the department of reason:

1. Care in induction—collating, considering, comparing facts. This pertains to intelligence.

2. Candour in conceding to such facts or arguments their full and true value as proofs—*i. e.,* intellectual honesty. Freedom from the sway of prejudgment is absolutely essential. To start with a bias of prejudice and prepossession is both unfair and unfits for a true decision. Galileo's discovery of satellites was met by a professor at Pisa with resistance because there "could

be but seven planets, seven being the number of completeness," etc.

II.—Conscience. Its province is to weigh right and wrong, and give to each value according to *moral* evidence. Hence again two needs:

1. A clean conscience, free from moral contamination, which endangers moral honesty.

2. A courageous conscience, ready to welcome rebuke. Conscience is a revolutionist, overturning the moral disorder. The heart makes the theology (Ps. xiv. 1; 1 Tim. i. 19).

III.—Sensibility. Its office is to respond to moral attraction and repulsion, to estimate moral beauty and deformity, according to spiritual standards of art. Hence again we need:

1. Senses, negatively, not dulled, blunted, deadened by habitual contact with evil. Even such high powers are capable of perversion by sin.

2. Senses positively exercised to discern good and evil, trained by discipline (Heb. v. 11-14).

IV.—Will. Its province is to act as handmaid to reason, conscience, etc.—to follow rational and moral conviction, and lead out all the forces of being in a holy crusade. Hence the will must not be perverse, but obedient. John vii. 17: "If any man will *do* His will," etc. Obedience is the organ of spiritual revelation (John xiv. 23). The world lacks the *perception, conception,* and *reception* of Divine things. (Note words "seeth," "knoweth," "receive." (John xiv. 17.)

V.—There is even a higher spiritual verification which comes by the Holy Spirit in experimental life (1 Cor. ii. 9-16). Hence prayer for illumination (Ps. cxix. 18).

To *such* a man the Bible is self-attesting, and needs no outside evidence or confirmation.

Lesson from a Little Child

"At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

"And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

"And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."—*Matt. xviii.* 1-4.

COMPARE Mark ix. 33-37.—The central thought is the necessity of the childlike spirit, either to get into the kingdom, or to get on and up, when once in; and the central quality of such childlikeness is HUMILITY, which is not thinking of self more highly than one ought to think (Romans xii. 3). Humility begets docility, which is readiness to be taught and led; and docility implies obedience and dependence.

The secret of entrance, and thus the secret of advance and exaltation, are found in humility; for the same docility, begetting alike obedience and dependence, ensures continual progress.

Moreover, all the highest graces have their root in childlike humility. From this springs (1) *Truth,* with its natural fruits, simplicity and sincerity. Likewise (2) *Faith,* with its confidence in a higher wisdom, and compliance with a higher will. Likewise (3) *Love,* with its gentleness and generosity. It is easy to show how a true humility, which is really self-effacement, thus implies the whole circle of graces, and finds its final bloom in the "meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter iv. 4).

How different the kingdom of heaven from the kingdoms of men! In the latter promotion is the result of self-seeking; in the former, of self-denial; in the for-

mer, of ambition to serve; in the latter, of ambition to rule.

Gift of the Holy Spirit

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you."—*John xvi. 7.*

Our Lord here unmistakably teaches that the Holy Spirit would more than compensate for His own bodily absence. This demands careful study, that we may, if possible, see why it is so. A few considerations are noteworthy:—

I.—The Spirit of God is God's Crowning Gift to Man. God's new gifts always include what precede, and add something beside. The gift of the Spirit makes the gift of the Word of God more precious by illumining its pages; and Christ more precious, by magnifying and glorifying Him in our eyes, and enabling us to behold and respond to His beauty.

II.—The Spirit of God is Himself The Highest Revelation of God. He comes to dwell within, and in the heart to reveal God. This form of revelation addresses the highest faculties of our spiritual nature, quickening them into exercise, and making us capable of new communion and fellowship with Him (1 Cor. ii.; Heb. v. 14).

III.—The Spirit of God Imparts to the Believer the Divine Nature. To Him we owe actual sonship by the birth from above (John iii. 1-10; 1 Cor. vi. 17): "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." An indissoluble union is formed between the believer and God. We become His offspring, bearing His likeness.

IV.—The Spirit of God supplies The Maternal Aspect of the Divine Character (Luke xv. 8-10; Rom.

viii.). Like a mother bearing and rearing offspring, teaching the child to walk and talk, educating, disciplining, preparing for service here and glory hereafter. In Luke xv. 8-10, the woman is apparently the Spirit of God in the church, seeking lapsed members and restoring backsliders.

V.—The Spirit of God is THE SPECIAL REVELATION OF GOD'S LOVE. Hence called the "Spirit of Grace." He comes particularly to woo and win and persuade the sinner to accept gracious offers and respond to Divine appeals. Hence the Spirit is never represented as angry, or dealing with us in wrath.

VI.—The Spirit of God DURING THIS DISPENSATION IS IN CONTROL IN THE CHURCH. This is, in fact, His peculiar dispensation, preparing for the era of the coming kingdom. John Owen suggests that the test of orthodoxy now is the relation of the believer or church to the Holy Spirit. As to "grieving" Him, it implies hindering His holy offices and operations. As Spirit of Life, He is to be received and imparted; as Spirit of Light, to be welcomed and reflected: and, as Spirit of Love, if not grieved, He both makes us responsive to God's love and able to love with a like spirit of love.

To hinder Him does not affect the seal He has put on us as God's own; but it does affect our clear consciousness and assurance of sonship.

The Vine and the Branches

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman," etc. *John xv.* 1-16.

ABOUT seven words, this whole parable moves: Vine, Branch, Fruit; Abide, Ask; Love, Joy.

The first three are specially connected; then the next two: abiding as the great condition, and asking,

as the grand privilege; then the last two, love and joy, as the result of such experience.

Of the first three, FRUIT is the important word, and is found in the parable eight times; and each time with a new, advance lesson. If there be abiding, the asking must be followed by receiving, for the disciple's prayer is really the mind of Christ appearing in his supplication, as all products of the branch are, in fact, found in the vine, as their source, and the life of the branch is not its own.

Consequently, where such identity exists, Christ's own love and joy must be reproduced in the disciple. Notice "*My* love," "*My* joy."

These great thoughts constitute this the richest unfolding of the secrets of spiritual life. The same lessons were taught after Pentecost in the "Body and its members," where the members correspond to the branches, the blood to the sap, and animal life to vegetable life. This may be one of the teachings reserved for the Spirit to express in fuller measure after He came; until then the mystery of the *Body* could not have been understood.

The Demoniacs of Gadara

"And when he was come to the other side into the Country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way."—*Matt. viii. 28.*

BEARING in mind the moral meaning of Christ's miracles, this is both one of the most stupendous and most significant. It seems intended to illustrate a sinner, hopelessly enslaved, not by one, but by many, vicious habits. To nothing does it correspond more than to the maddening effect of strong drink and sensual lusts combined, as in the drunkard and the debauchee. It has therefore a very special encouragement for those who

are working to save the poor victims of vice and crime who are outcasts from decent society.

I.—They are exceeding *fierce*. All restraints of respectability are thrown off, and they are reckless in indulging their depraved tendencies.

II.—They are *untamable* by any human method. All man's best endeavours have been expended in vain to reclaim these abandoned sinners.

III.—They are pursuing a self-damaging and *self-destructive* course, developing in the body incurable disease, and even unseating the reason.

IV.—They are possessed not of one, but *many* demons. These abominable forms of sin do not go alone. All the worst passions and lusts unite in revolt.

V. These debasing lusts are akin to the *habits of swine;* they belong to the most bestial part of human nature, befitting only the lowest animals.

VI. And yet in Christ even such slaves of sin find *immediate* and *complete deliverance,* and are found clothed, in their right mind, etc.

VII.—To all such His grand injunction is, "Go and bear witness" to other slaves of sin as to the redeeming power of Christ.

Natural Law of Sin and Penalty

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" etc.—*Romans vi.* 16-23.

A VERY valuable line of thought is suggested by these words. Men are prone to think that moral order in the universe is arbitrary, and depends on the will of God; but it exists in the nature of things, and could not be otherwise. Were there no God, we cannot conceive of some things as morally different. Heaven and Hell

are moral necessities, the inevitable outgrowth of holiness and sin.

This chapter opens with a question: "Shall we continue in sin?" About midway we meet an injunction: "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body," etc.

Here are some great fixed laws of evil unfolded:—

I.—One sin tends to another. "Iniquity unto iniquity":

(*a*) A repetition of the *same* sin, covering one lie by another, etc.

(*b*) A sin of a *worse* character. The first sin prepares for another, more heinous. (Psalm i. 1.) Compare Cain, Achan, Ananias, Peter, Judas.

II.—Occasional sin soon becomes *habitual* sin. (Prov. v. 22; Isa. v. 18) note "cords" and "cartrope."

III.—Habitual sin becomes absolute *slavery*. (Verse 16; vii. 14; Ephes. iv. 19; 1 Tim. iv. 2.)

IV.—Sin is unto *death*. (Verses 16-21.) Not only unto physical death, but unto spiritual death, which includes:

(*a*) The worst damage and disaster. Comp. Lust, Gluttony, Lying, Drink, Anger, Malice, etc. Damage to conscience, Reason, Imagination, and Sensibility. "Hours with Mystics," Book X., p. 231.

(*b*) Decay and corruption—like putridity of death—offensive in God's nostrils. (Hab. i. 13.)

(*c*) Distance from God—alienation. Adam in Eden. Luke xv.: Prodigal.

V.—Sin brings everlasting shame. (Verse 21.) Shame is partly the result of exposure. All secrets brought to light at bar of God. (Eccles. xii. 14; 1 Cor. iv. 3-5.) At the Great White Throne all secret history will appear as handwriting on wall of Belshazzar's palace.

So far the natural law. But there is also a judicial and governmental process. "*Wages*" are (*a*) what is due, and (*b*) what God as a righteous Master pays in

full. But note, Eternal Life is His *gift,* and in grace there is provision both for forgiveness and enablement. (vi. 14.)

The Secret of Prosperity

"Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."—*Psalm i.* 3.

THREE passages of Scripture give essentially the same prescription for prosperity. (Joshua i. 7, 8.) Thus to this great general-in-chief the Book of the Law of the Lord was given as a guide, a manual of instruction. He was bidden to meditate therein day and night, and observe to do according thereto. And the promise is "that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest"; "then shall thou make thy way prosperous, and thou shalt have good success."

In Psalm i. 2, 3, this command and promise are again interlinked, and in words singularly like to those addressed to Joshua. He whose delight is in the law of the Lord and who meditates therein day and night is likened to an evergreen tree whose leaf withers not, and whose fruit fails not; and again we are told, "whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

In James i. 25. "Whoso looketh into the perfect Law of Liberty and continueth looking"—that is, meditates therein—"this man shall be blessed in his deed." Here is the same thought in different words.

These three passages of Scripture are significant. The first is at the opening of the book of Joshua—the book of the wars of the Lord; the second at the opening of the Psalms—the book of devotion, worship, experience; the last is in the opening of the Epistle of James—the book of practical righteousness. The first gives counsel to a great Leader of God's hosts; the second concerns every believer who essays to walk with God; and the

last gives the secret of all outward conduct conformed to the will of God. The two figures used by David and by James are also significant; the tree planted by the channels of irrigation, and the man gazing with reflection upon his own image in a perfect mirror. In the latter case we have the Law of God as a revelation of a man's self, what he is and ought to be. In the former we have the Law as a source of life and knowledge and strength in conduct and character, the disciple absorbing the word of God as the tree does the moisture and translating precept into practice as the tree transmutes water into sap.

In all three cases the emphasis is upon MEDITATION. We need time and thought both to understand and absorb the contents of the word, and when these conditions are fulfilled several grand results follow:

1. We have a *guide to life.* This word of God becomes a practical manual of the Divine art of Holy living. There is not a crisis or emergency for which it has not sufficient counsel or comfort.

2. We have a *source of strength.* Every book is to be judged most of all by the *residuum* left by reading it. As a stream deposits iron, sulphur, or gold on its bed, every book leaves a deposit in the mind and heart. The word of God deposits in us the very thoughts and secrets of God.

3. We have a *mirror of self.* We learn what manner of man we are, and may and ought to be in Christ. This magic mirror is a double mirror. We see in it both the reality as it is and the possibility, as it may be—the real and the ideal.

Here is the one and only prescription for a universal prosperity and success. It indirectly explains thousands of cases of failure and defeat.

Reverting to Original Type

"But from the beginning it was not so."—*Matt. xix.* 8.

THE specific lesson taught here is undoubtedly that in course of time, by gradual and sometimes rapid changes, corruptions creep in, so that God's original order becomes obscured and perverted, and we learn to accept even a totally different set of customs, and even of notions, from those which were at first held sacred. That was a curious experiment of Professor Bernard, who illustrated our unconscious accommodation to a vicious atmosphere by placing a sparrow under a bell glass receiver with air enough for three hours' respiration. At the end of two hours he put a second sparrow under the receiver, which at once fell over dead, while the former bird was able to sustain the process of breathing for the remaining hour. There is a corresponding fact in the spiritual realm. We unconsciously learn to tolerate evils which, if suddenly confronted in a purer society, would shock and overwhelm us. If from a primitive apostolic church life a man like Stephen had been, in a moment, transported into the modern corrupted church atmosphere, he would have been stifled.

The only way to save ourselves from this unconscious accommodation to a low standard of holy living is to get back to first principles and practices—candidly to compare what is with what was, and, living much with God in the secret place, breathe such a pure atmosphere that we shall recognise the polluted air of which otherwise we should be scarcely conscious.

There are several respects in which we need to go back to the beginning, and look at the standards which prevailed in the primitive church before corruptions crept in. We mention the following features of primitive church life which seem conspicuous:

1. The *Recognition of the Holy Spirit.*
2. The *Equality of all believers* in right and privilege.
3. The *Stewardship of Saints* in property and possessions.
4. The *Prevailing Power* of definite and united intercession.
5. The *Separation of the Church* from the World.
6. The *Universal Obligation* of bearing witness to the World.
7. The *undisputed imminence of the Second Advent.*
8. The *Personal Presence and Leadership of Christ.*
9. The *Courageous Boldness* shown in Witness to Christ.
10. The appeal to *Fulfilled Prophecy.*
11. *Immediate Obedience* to the Spirit's call.
12. *Ceaseless Activity* in preaching the Gospel.
13. *Constant Blessing* attending the Word.
14. Prevalence of the *Martyr Spirit.*

No texts need be cited. The proofs of these positions pervade the whole Book.

The Personification of Wisdom

"Doth not wisdom cry?"—*Proverbs viii.* 1.

THROUGHOUT the Book of Proverbs, Wisdom continually appears personified: i. 20-33; iii. 13-18; iv. 7-13, etc.

In chapters viii., ix. this sublime figure is most fully carried out. The feminine gender is used as that of the Hebrew word. Wisdom is here represented as a Divine Queen, who builds a stately structure, adorned and supported with seven massive pillars, and in it spreading a celestial banquet, to which she invites all passers-by, without distinction, that she might attract the

simple and unwary from folly's dangerous feast, with its intoxication and deadly indulgences.

The highest proof of the wisdom of the Bible is, perhaps, the *conception* of *wisdom* itself as it is here set forth. It consists

1. Of wise *Concepts,* or ideas of truth.
2. Of wise *Precepts,* or rules of duty.

It seeks not only to inform and instruct the mind, but to reform and reconstruct the life. It is sublime as theory, but sublimer as practice.

Here are the two points of view from which to survey the Wisdom of all God's Teaching. It imparts to us the sublimest conceptions of Truth ever put before the mind of man; and it regulates the daily conduct and character according to the most exalted ideals and models of virtue and righteousness. And hence it is conceived also as the secret of the highest prosperity and blessedness. For, obviously, man can attain to no higher and more enduring bliss than to *know* the highest *truth* and *practice* the highest *virtue.*

Some examples of the Concepts and Precepts of the Bible might be added in illustration and verification of these statements.

I.—THE GREAT CONCEPTS OF THE BIBLE.

1. The concept of *God;* particularly as the perfect union of the *natural* perfections, Eternity, Infinity, Immutability, Wisdom, Knowledge, Power, with the *Moral* perfections, Truth, Righteousness, Justice, Holiness and Love.

2. The concept of *Man;* as Spirit, Soul and Body, all united in one personality. In his normal state, the spirit, as the highest part, rules the soul, and the soul the body.

3. The concept of Perfect *Character,* as combining *Truth* and *Love:* truth being the expression of all right

thinking, and love, of all holy and unselfish feeling and motive.

4. The concept of the *Universe,* as consisting of two great departments—the *material* and the *moral.* The material is visible and temporal; the moral, invisible and eternal. (See 2 Cor. iv. 16-18.)

5. The concept of the *God-man,* as equally perfect God and perfect man; descending as Son of God to become also Son of Man; then ascending as Son of Man to take His place at the right hand of God, henceforth to unite both Divinity and Humanity in Himself. (Heb. i., ii.)

6. The concept of the *Powers* of the *unseen world*—a double hierarchy of evil and good—fallen angels in social ranks, with Satan at their head; unfallen angels in corresponding ranks, with Christ at their head. The Holy Spirit, dwelling in the believer and making him able to cope with the powers of darkness.

II.—THE GREAT PRECEPTS OF THE BIBLE.

1. Repent ye and believe the Gospel. Mark i. 15. Repentance is the negative side of believing, and believing is the positive side of repentance. One is a change of mind toward sin, abandoning it; the other toward Christ, accepting Him as Saviour and Lord.

2. Seek first the Kingdom of God. (Matt. vi. 33.) Put first things first; then the secondary will be added by God, unsought. If you put secondary things in the primary place you forfeit the primary altogether, and have no assurance even of securing the secondary.

3. Love not the world. (1 John ii. 15.) The peculiar peril of the world is not the inherent sinfulness of worldly things, but the fact that they belong to the material and temporal order, and, if allowed to absorb love, effectually hide from us the immaterial and the eternal.

4. Abide in Me and I in you. (John xv. 4.) The idea is that of a spiritual *Element.* Of an element only is it true that we abide in it, while at the same time it abides in us—as the iron is in the fire while the fire is in the iron. We are to abide in Christ that He may abide in us.

5. Resist the Devil. (James iv. 7.) The habitual attitude should be antagonism. But the only way to carry on this war is to *submit to God.* Hence this injunction immediately precedes the other. Submission to God makes God our ally as well as Sovereign, and hence our victory over Satan.

6. Take up the Cross. (Matt. xvi. 24.) This means choose a life of self-abnegation. Instead of sparing yourself for your own sake, deny yourself for Christ's sake. The life voluntarily lost for others is found in service; the life saved for self is lost for others, and finally proves lost even for self.

"Newness of Life"

"Like as . . . Even so we also should walk in newness of life."—*Romans vi.* 4.

What constituted the "Newness of Life," in the case *of Christ?*

I.—He rose from the dead to die no more. Henceforth He had a deathless Body.

II.—He appears to have been free from former limitations—no longer "Under the Law."

1. Changing appearances.

2. Appearing and vanishing at will.

3. Ascending, contrary to law of gravitation, etc.

III.—Lived more in heaven than on earth. Like a bird, living above, perching now and then on a tree.

IV.—Not dependent on food, etc., or ordinary modes of locomotion.

V.—Miraculously attired. Were not His new garments after resurrection miraculous?

VI.—No longer subject to assaults of man or Satan. Abrupt change from the spear-thrust. No more indignity, etc. No temptation of Satan during *forty* days before ascension.

VII.—Demonstrated Son of *God* (Rom. i. 4), as previously Son of *Man*.

VIII.—Supernatural life throughout. Spiritual side predominating.

IX.—Impression of victorious life reigns throughout.

X.—Previously everything focussed in Cross. Now in Crown.

The Foundations and Rudiments

"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God;

"Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."—*Hebrews vi.* 1, 2.

This is a much doubted and disputed passage. Perhaps, as in many a like case, the true meaning is one which lies on the surface, and the simplicity which is in Christ will help us where the subtlety that is in philosophy and theology may mislead. There are here enumerated six first principles of the doctrine of Christ, which are treated as foundation truths, to be accepted as rudimental and fundamental, and to be always left undisturbed if there is to be any upbuilding of character or conduct or service for God:—

1. Repentance from Dead Works.
2. Faith toward God.
3. The Doctrine of Baptism.
4. Of Laying on of Hands.
5. Of Resurrection of the Dead.

6. Of Future Judgment.

These follow the order of experience, chronologically, and of development, logically; and they seem to represent, as equivalents, six great truths which lie at the very basis of all truth in doctrine and holiness in practice:—

1. Abandonment of sin and merit.
2. Dependence on Christ's work alone.
3. Confession of Him as Lord.
4. Full reception of the Holy Spirit.
5. Faith in the Unseen and Eternal Life.
6. Confidence in the Second Advent and its awards.

The Natural History of the Penitent

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven."—*Psalm xxxii.* 1.

THIS is one of the seven "Penitential Psalms," and, carefully examined, it reminds of a definite path from a starting point to a goal, with distinct milestones to mark progress. It is supposed to be the outburst of David's soul, when he first emerged from the shadows of his threefold crime, of adultery, deception, and murder. This devout lyric indicates the stages in his departure from and return to God.

1. SIN. Note the three words, "transgression," "sin," "iniquity."

2. SILENCE. He appears to have backslidden for nearly a year after his adultery (verse 3).

3. REMORSE. Meanwhile he suffered torture both from conscience and Divine Discipline (3-4).

4. CONFESSION. Observe again three words, "acknowledged," "not hid," "confess."

5. FORGIVENESS. Again three words, "forgiven," "covered," "imputeth not."

6. OBEDIENCE. He now looks to God henceforth to

guide him with His *eye,* not by the severe bit and bridle of discipline.

7. Testimony. And concludes by bearing witness to God (10, 11).

Here are seven steps or stages, the first three of sin and its consequences, the last three of forgiveness and its results, and the middle stage which separates, or rather links the first and last experiences, is *confession.* What a valuable lesson is here found for us all. (Comp. Prov. xxviii. 13; 1 John i. 8-10.)

The Finishing of Man's Work

"So Moses finished the work."—*Exodus xl.* 33.

This is one of those texts which, like a golden milestone, mark at once a terminus and a starting point. The work of making and rearing the Tabernacle of Testimony reached its completion. All made "after the pattern showed in the mount," not a variation or deviation in the most minute detail from the divine model furnished. So far as *man* is concerned, the work was "finished," to the setting up of the last board and the hanging of the last curtain. Aaron and his sons had been washed, anointed, and robed according to God's explicit directions, for the priestly office. Then the Cloud covered the Tabernacle of Assembly, and the glory of the Lord so filled it, without and within, that Moses, the builder, himself was not able to enter into the sacred enclosure. And so was fulfilled the promise that, when all was sanctified *to* God's glory, He would sanctify all *by* his glory. (xxix. 43-46.)

This lesson, unsurpassed in its way in all the Holy Scripture, is intended manifestly never to be superseded. It typically teaches all that is doctrinally taught afterward. The whole New Testament is fragrant with this holy pervasive perfume of a double consecration.

1. *Man's dedication of himself to God,* spirit, soul, and body.

2. *God's consecration of man to Himself* by His Holy Spirit.

These two constitute the whole mystery of Holy Living, and need always to be studied side by side, either without the other being defective or misleading.

In certain texts the human side predominates, as in II Cor. vi. 17—vii. 1, Romans xii. 1-2.

In other texts the divine side is equally conspicuous, as in 1 Thess. v. 23, 24.

Yet even in these latter cases the two are conjoined. In 1 Thess. v. 23—The Very God of Peace sanctify you wholly. Here how emphatic is God's sanctifying power; yet in the previous verse we read, "Abstain from evil in every form." This is as plainly man's separation of Himself unto God.

Let us note also that man's dedication of himself includes:—

1. The negative of Separation from evil.
2. The Positive of Sanctification unto all good.

Also the work of God is two-fold:—

1. Sanctification in the Truth. (John xvii. 17.)
2. Sanctification in the Spirit. (1 Cor. vi. 19.)

Recollection, Reflection and Imitation

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their life course.

"Jesus Christ, yesterday, to-day, and forever is the same."—*Hebrews xiii.* 7, 8.

THE occult thought here is an appeal to the exercise of three great faculties: *Recollection, Reflection,* and *Imitation.*

1. *Memory* is to be used as the storehouse of treasures,

to preserve what is worthy of undying remembrance in the lives and teachings of our spiritual guides.

2. But we must not only remember, but *reflect*—the beautiful word, "*consider*," suggests watching as men gaze at the stars—reviewing the whole course of holy lives, and especially their end and goal.

3. And, to remembrance and reflection, we must add *imitation*—and of what? Not the faults, or idiosyncracies, nor even the virtues of others, but rather their *faith.* The writer has just been rebuking *greed,* which could only exist in the decay of faith; and he bids those Hebrew disciples imitate the faith of spiritual guides, who had suffered the loss of all things for Christ, and at the end found richest reward. And he adds, "Yesterday, to-day, and forever, Christ is unchangingly the same."

The First Example of Giving

"Let them make me a sanctuary."—*Exodus xxv.* 8.

When God thus first calls on His people to build Him a sanctuary, ten remarkable conditions meet, as though to indicate to all future ages the principles of acceptable giving:—

1. The *End:* a sanctuary for God to dwell in.
2. The *Pattern*—divinely prescribed and minutely.
3. The *Appeal,* addressed to none but His people.
4. The *Condition*—freewill offering, not of constraint.
5. The *Company of givers*—all who were willing.
6. The *Form of gifts*—whatever they could and would bring.
7. The *Quality*—the best of every sort, nothing defective.
8. The *Quantity*—enough and more than needful. (Exod. xxxvi. 5-7.)

9. The *Final act of man*—setting apart to glory of God.

10. The *Crowning act of God*—filling with His glory.

Compare this first lesson with the last in Malachi iii. 10, where the lesson taught is that so long as the gifts continue the blessing from above will also! Then turn to 1 Cor. viii., ix., where two whole chapters are given to the setting forth of the principles and motives of Christian giving in one of the most exhaustive and elaborate treatments of any subject found in the word of God.

Compare Matt. x. 41, 42.

Teachings About Prayers

"Praying always."—*Ephes. vi.* 18.

Prayer has some marvellous incentives in the word of God. No wonder Coleridge, referring to his earlier and sceptical utterances on Prayer, pronounced them folly, and solmenly said, "Prayer is the highest possible exercise of the human soul."

Note the following points:

1. Prayer may be offered "in the name of Jesus Christ." That is, by virtue of our identity with Him. Jno. xvi. 23-27.

2. By the inward moving and intercession of the Spirit of God. Rom. viii. 15, 26, 27.

3. Prayers are inseparable from our calling and ordination to service. John xv. 16.

4. Prayer is often the only relief in our deep distress. Psalm cxxx. 1, 2.

5. Prayer is the natural resort of the child who realises that he has a Father. Matt. vii. 7-11.

6. Prayer has the definite promise of unlimited power,

where there is unlimited faith. James i. 6, 7. Compare Mark xi. 22-24.

7. Prayer finds not only access but boldness in the mediation of the Lord Jesus. Hebrews iv. 15, 16.

Obligations Lost in Privilege

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace (this favour) given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."—*Eph. iii.* 8-13.

HERE the whole conception of duty is lost sight of in the overwhelming delight, not obligation but consummate privilege.

In what does this consummate bestowment of grace consist?

I.—In the *proclamation* to the nations of the unsearchable riches of Christ, stored up in God for every believing soul; in opening up the bank of heaven to a bankrupt world, and say, "Your debt is paid, and all your need supplied, according to His riches in glory."

II.—In the *interpretation* of the mystery which was hid in God until it had been unveiled in Christ to Paul. Of all the apostles and writers of the New Testament, he is the only one who deals in such mysteries.

III.—In the *revelation* to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, to angelic hierarchies, by the Church, of the manifold wisdom of God in human redemption.

IV.—In the *consummation* of the eternal plan of God. That plan is waiting for our co-operation in order to reach its fulfilment. In 1 Cor. xii. we are taught the inter-dependence of the members of the human body, but there is added the statement that even the *head* cannot say to the feet, "I have no need of you."

Christ could have done this stupendous work without us, but when He chose to take the position of Head

over all things to the Church, He chose to depend upon the members. How are you saved? By the death of Christ. But Christ might have died in vain if somebody had not told you of His death. Christ spread out His hands on the cross as far as He could. You are to go and touch them with one hand, and with the other be a current-bearer of redeeming love, reaching some whom He would not have reached, if you had not stood between Him and them.

How is the head to go anywhere if the feet do not carry it? How is Jesus Christ to go to this dying world if you do not carry the message? We are the fulfillers of the plan of God, the necessary instruments and agencies of carrying out His eternal purpose.

"Suffering and success are so linked that the highest success never comes without suffering. If you succeed without suffering, it is because somebody else suffered instead of you. If you suffer without succeeding, it is that another may succeed because of you." The Church needs a baptism of sorrow and suffering. It requires but a very little study of the past to see that the days of peril are the days of greatest prosperity. In the apostolic days, when it was a dangerous thing to confess Jesus Christ, how powerful the Church was! The *via crucis* became the *via lucis,* and then came decay.

A Study of the Pneumatica

"Now concerning what pertains to the Spirit (*πνευματικα*) brethren I would not have you ignorant."—1 *Cor. xii.* 1.

THE word, *πνευματικα,* here covers more than mere gifts or graces of the Spirit. It includes *whatever pertains to His person and work,* in His relations both to the individual believer and to the church of Christ. It is not strange if Paul, writing by the Spirit, says: "I

would not have you ignorant concerning such matters," for this is the *climax of all revealed truths* of practical importance to the child of God. From his first salutation of Jesus as Saviour and Lord, to his very entrance into heaven, everything, in sanctification, growth, and service, depends upon his relations to the Spirit of God. The one great practical question is: "Received ye the Holy Ghost when ye believed?" (Acts xix. 2.) However little as yet we may know the Spirit, all holy living and holy serving depend absolutely upon His working in us. How much may the measure of his power be increased when we do know Him and enjoy conscious union with Him! John Owen declared, in his "Pneumatologia," or Doctrine of the Spirit, that the test of our soundness in the faith, in this dispensation of the Spirit, is our attitude toward Him; and it is not too much to say that our measure of knowledge of the Scriptures and of Christ absolutely depends upon our practical acquaintance with the Holy Spirit.

If, therefore, we take up, in the New Testament alone, for example, the references to the Spirit, we find a *steady progress of doctrine,* a gradual unfolding of truth concerning His person and work: and in the *names, titles,* or *designations* of the Spirit, in the order of occurrences, taking only the cases in which the word πνευμα appears to be used in its *divine* sense, we find also a remarkable and progressive unveiling of truth. Again, scattered through both Old and New Testaments, is a large number of *symbols or types,* which apply to Him and His working; and, when we compare the names or characters applied to Him with these various typical or symbolical references, it will appear that there are about as many of one as of the other, and a little study may even show that the *titles* and the *types* correspond.

We venture, tentatively at least, to arrange the two as nearly as we may in their order and correspondence—first noting the various names or characters in which

the Spirit is brought before us, substantially in the order of occurrence, and then, putting opposite each name the symbol which appears more or less closely to correspond therewith.

The Spirit of God is known as:

Names and Titles.		Symbols.
1. The Comforter or Paraclete . .	John xiv. 16.	
2. The Spirit of Truth	John xiv. 17. xv. 26. xvi. 13.	Light.
3. The Spirit of Witness . . .	. .	Seal.
(1) To Christ .	John xv. 26.; xvi. 4.; vi. 27.	
(2) To Believers .	Rom. viii. 16. Eph. i. 13. 2 Cor. i. 22.	
4. The Spirit of Conviction, or Reproof . of Demonstration	John xvi. 8-10 1 Cor. ii. 4. Acts ii. 37. vii. 54.	Sword.
5. The Spirit of Power or Enduement .	Luke xxiv. 49. Acts i. 8. 2 Tim. i. 7. Acts ii. 2.	Wind, Fire.
6. The Spirit of Holiness, . . . Holy Spirit . .	Rom. i. 4. Luke xi. 13. John i. 32.	Dove.
7. The Spirit of Life .	Rom. viii. 2. Ezek. xxxvii. John xx. 22.	Breath.
8. The Spirit of Adoption . . .	Rom. viii. 15.	Articulate Speech. Abba. Child's first utterance.
9. The Spirit of Help, Intercession, . Especially in Prayer . .	Rom. viii. 26. . . .	Groan. Inarticulate Speech.

Names and Titles.		Symbols.
10. The Spirit of Liberty or Free Spirit .	2 Cor. iii. 17 Psalm li. 12. John iv. 14. John vii. 37-39.	Well or Spring.
11. The Spirit of Wisdom, or Revelation in the Knowledge of Him .	Ephes. i. 17. 1 Cor. ii. Rev. iii. 18.	Ointment, Eye-Salve.
12. Anointing, Unction	1 John i. 20, 27.	Oil.
13. The Spirit of Promise . . or Earnest .	Ephes. i. 13. 2 Cor. i. 22.	Foretaste.
14. The Spirit of Love	2 Tim. i. 7.	Dove.
15. The Spirit of Meekness . . .	Gal. vi 1.	Lamb.
16. The Spirit of a Sound Mind .	2 Tim. i. 7.	Health, Sanity.
17. The Spirit of Eternity, or "Eternal Spirit" . .	Heb. ix. 14.	Life.
18. The Spirit of Grace	Heb. x. 29.	Blood, Water.
19. The Spirit of Glory Glorifies Christ. Enables us to do so.	1 Peter iv. 14.	Shekinah.
20. The Spirit of Prophecy . . .	Rev. xix. 10. Joel ii. 28.	Flood.

It is also very noticeable that the *Spirit of Evil,* the Devil, is represented in as many distinct characters and modes of working, and with as many symbols of his power. When the two are put side by side we find a strange correspondence. Satan and the Spirit of God are represented as exactly opposite in every respect and aspect.

The Devil is known as:

Names and Titles.		Symbols.
1. The Adversary (vs. Advocate) . .	1 Peter v. 8.	Lion.
Accuser, Slanderer	Rev. xii. 10.	
2. The Spirit of Lies, Error, Deception	John viii. 44.	Night.
	Acts v. 3.	Darkness.
3. The Spirit of Denial, Betrayal of Christ	Luke xxii. 31. John xiii. 27.	
Antichrist . .	2 John 7. 1 John ii. 18-22.	
4. The Spirit of Delusion . . .	2 Thess. ii. 11.	Snare.
	1 Tim. iii. 7.	
	2 Tim. ii. 26.	
5. The Spirit of Infirmity, Weakness .	Luke xiii. 11.	Disease—Palsy.
6. The Spirit of Evil, Uncleanliness .	Luke iv. 33.	Filth.
Disobedience, Wickedness .	Eph. ii. 2.	Vomit.
Devil, Evil, Vile, Foul Spirit . .	Rev. xviii. 2.	Mire.
7. The Spirit of Death or Slumber . .	Rom. xi. 8.	Sleep.
Murderer . .	John viii. 44.	
8. The Spirit of Apostasy		
9. The Spirit of Hindrance	1 Thess. ii. 18.	Thorn.
and Resistance .	Zech. iii. 1.	
10. The Spirit of Doubt	Gen. iii. 1-5.	
Despair .	Jer. ii. 25.	
Fear .	Rom. viii. 15.	
	Jas. ii. 19.	
11. The Spirit of Bondage . . .	Rom. viii. 15.	Yoke.
	Gal. v. 1.	
Slavery .	Rom. vi. 6, 16.	Chain, Bond.
12. The Spirit of Blindness	2 Cor. iv. 4.	Veil.
and Folly . .	Psalm xiv. 1.	
13. The Spirit of Remorse . . .	2 Cor. vii. 10.	Sting.
Torment		

Names and Titles.		Symbols.
14. The Spirit of Hatred	1 John iii. 15.	Gall, Venom
Malice .	Titus iii. 3.	
Envy .	Matt. xxvii. 18.	
	Rom. i. 29.	
Jealousy	Titus iii. 3.	
	Numb. v. 14.	
15. The Spirit of Perverse Mind .	Isa. xix. 14.	
Madness	Luke vi. 11.	
16. The Spirit of the Age	Eph. ii. 2.	
	Eph. vi. 12.	
17. The Spirit of Despite and Profanation .	Heb. x. 29.	Profane Foot.
18. The Spirit of Blasphemy . .	Rev. xiii. 5.	Fiery Dart.
Anathema	1 Cor. xii. 3.	
19. The Spirit of Pride	Jas. iv. 6.	
20. The Spirit of Divination . . .	Acts xvi. 16.	Sparks?
False Prophecy	1 John iv. 1.	
Lying Wonders	2 Thess. ii. 9.	

The *working of Satan* is represented under the following aspects:

1. *Malignant Hatred of Man.* Habitual delight in tempting and overcoming and destroying, especially God's people.

1 Peter v. 8: "Your adversary," etc.

Luke xxii. 31: "Desired to have you."

2. *Subtle Methods.* Exhibits great art and subtlety in *wiles* and modes of attack.

2 Cor. ii. 11: "We are not ignorant of his devices."

Eph. vi. 11: "Wiles of the Devil."

3. *Mean Advantage.* Takes skilful advantage of circumstances favouring his designs.

Christ's Temptation (Matt. iv. 1-10).

1 Cor. vii. 5: "Satan tempt you not for your incontinency."

4. *Assault at Weak Points.* He appeals to natural propensities.

Pride (1 Chron. xxi. 1).

Covetousness (John xiii. 2): "Having put into heart of Judas."

Love of Applause, etc. (Acts v. 3): "Satan filled thine heart to lie."

Fear, Timidity (Luke xxii. 31; 54-60).

Lust (1 Cor. vii. 5; x. 6-11): Lust, idolatry, murmuring.

5. *Preoccupation of Mind* with the World and Flesh, thus barring out the truth.

Luke viii. 12: "Taketh away that which was sown."

2 Cor. iv. 4: Blinded minds. "By those things which perish," is a possible translation here.

6. *Habitual Hindrance of all Good* (1 Thess. ii. 18).

7. *May be Resisted by Help of God.*

Luke xi. 22: "When a stronger than he," etc.

1 Pet. v. 8, 9: "Whom resist."

James iv. 7: "Resist the devil."

Eph. vi. 10, 11: "Be strong—panoply of God."

Luke xxii. 32: "I have prayed," etc.

8. When *Not Resisted Thoughts become Acts, and Acts, Habits.* Snares and chains bind and hold us.

John xiii. 2: "The devil having now put it into the heart."

27: "Satan entered into."

2 Tim., ii. 26: "Out of snare of devil."

These thoughts are the more startling when we remember that *every human being is represented as under the control of one or the other* of these exactly opposite powers: either of the Spirit of God or of the Devil.

Comp. Eph. ii. 2, 3: "The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, *among whom we all had our course of life";* Col. i. 13: "Delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the Kingdom of

his dear Son"; 1 John iii. 10: "Children of God and children of the devil"—only two classes.

The World, the Flesh, and the Devil

In three cases only are these three foes classed together. Compare Ephesians ii. 1-3, vi. 11, 12; I John ii. 14-17.

The snare of the world is two-fold: it is the *visible* and *temporal* order. Hence its corrective and antidote are found in communion with the *unseen* and the *eternal;* our future rights as heirs, and our present joys as foretastes, of the world to come.

There are two snares of the flesh: the grosser carnal pleasures of sensuality, and the more refined of intellectuality. Appetite stands for the former, and avarice and ambition for the latter. The gross sins of the flesh are like mire in which, as swine, men wallow; the more refined are as a mirror turned downward to earth and reflecting earthly things. The corrective to the flesh is the spiritual mind, which displaces the carnal, reflecting heavenly things and assimilating us thereto.

There are, again, two great Satanic snares, aside from the world and the flesh, which he uses. He encourages disbelief by his lies, and unbelief by his wiles, leading men either to deny the truth or, even when they believe it, to doubt and distrust God's faithfulness. The remedy is given by James iv. 7—the double attitude: resistance to the devil, and submission unto God. But let us notice that submission to God comes *first,* and is the very secret of true resistance to the devil.

We have, then, three foes—world, flesh, devil. Two perils in each case:—

The world—visible, temporal.

The flesh—sensual, carnal.
The devil—lies, wiles.
The Remedy:—
The world to come—invisible, eternal.
The Spirit—spiritual communion and conformity.
The habit of obedience to God and resistance to evil.

The Resurrection of Christ

"Now is Christ risen from the dead."—1 *Cor. xv.* 20.

The *Ressurection of Christ* has a many-sided meaning and bearing in Holy Scripture.

I.—It forms a focus of Fulfilled Prophecy, linking the Old and New Testaments in one. (Acts ii. 24-31.)

II.—It is the grand proof and demonstration of our Lord's Divinity and Deity: The Son of God with Power. (Rom. i. 4.)

III.—It is the last, greatest, and most comprehensive of all Miracles, making credible all others. (Matt. xi. 5; John xx. 8.)

IV.—It is the finishing touch of Christ's Atoning Work, and includes his Ascension to God's Right Hand. (Rom. iv. 25; John xvi. 10.)

V.—It is the pledge of the Resurrection of the believer, and a first-fruits showing the nature of the harvest. (1 Cor. xv. 49; Philip iii. 21.)

VI.—It was an event wholly without precedent, introducing even our Lord to a new experience as the Son of Man. (Rom. vi. 4, 9; Eph. i. 19.)

VII.—It was the new model of the Believer's life, typifying the introduction of his whole being into a new plane. (Rom. vi. 4; Coloss. iii. 1, 2.)

VIII.—It became the new measure and standard of God's power in the believer, working in him mightily. (Comp. Micah vii. 15; Eph. i. 19.)

The Cross should not be our tarrying place, nor the

Tomb, but, rather, the Throne. We are not to think of a *dead* Christ, but a *risen* Christ. Here atonement finds its completion, and the life of the believer its true commencement.

The Believer's New Element

"Ye are . . . in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you."—*Romans viii.* 9.

This language, and other language like it (John xv. 4.), can be understood only as we think of an *element,* like air, water, fire, etc.

Of every such element it is true:

1. It is *Infinite—vaster* than what dwells in it.

2. It is *Independent* of that to which it is *indispensable.*

3. It is *Inexhaustible*—capable of nourishing, etc., without depletion.

4. It is *Indivisible*—it cannot be divided, but maintains unbroken unity.

5. It is *Indwelling*—admits *mutual indwelling*—both receives into itself and enters into that which it receives.

6. It is *Inclusive—comprehensive*—embraces in itself all that is needful for that which lives in it.

7. It is *Impartive—imparts all its qualities to* whatsoever it supports.

So of the Holy Spirit. He is infinite, independent of us, yet indispensable to us, inexhaustible and indivisible, all comprehensive, and yet all communicative, and while we dwell in Him, He also dwells in us.

Christian Liberality

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."—*2 Corinthians, viii.* 9.

These two entire chapters are given to the discussion of the laws, principles, motives, methods, and results of

Christian giving; and careful study will show that nothing more remains to be written on this great theme. Here the whole mind of God seems revealed. We may consider the contents of these chapters under two heads: I. The Principles; II. The motives of giving.

I.—The PRINCIPLES of acceptable giving:

1. The *Basis:* Self-giving, viii. 5 (comp. Psalm 1.)
2. The *Conditions:*
   - (*a*) A willing mind.
   - (*b*) Proportioned to ability (viii. 12).
3. Law of *Equality,* or equalisation (viii. 13-15).
   - (*a*) Individuality. Every man.
   - (*b*) Burdens shared and so lightened.
   - (*c*) Mutual dependence.
   - (*d*) Recognition of Brotherhood (Ex. xiv. 16-18).
4. Law of *Bounty* (ix. 5-8).
   - (*a*) Ready, laid up beforehand.
   - (*b*) On principle, not impulse.
   - (*c*) Habitual, systematic, not occasional.
   - (*d*) Deliberate and conscientious.
   - (*e*) Cheerful, not reluctant.
5. Law of *Quantity* (ix. 6, 7).
   - (*a*) According to measure of knowledge and ability.
   - (*b*) According to desire and expectation of harvest.
   - (*c*) According to extremity and urgency of need.
6. Law of *Quality* (ix. 7) determined by
   - (*a*) Motive and real meaning of the giver.
   - (*b*) Spirit—sympathy and love.
   - (*c*) Spontaneity—not of necessity, &c.
   - (*d*) As unto the Lord—servant and steward.
7. Law of *Faith* (ix. 8-11), believing that giving is
   - (*a*) Heeding God's call of need, *without.*
   - (*b*) Responding to working of His grace *within.*
   - (*c*) Yielding back to Him His own.

(*d*) Depending on His further supply of *my* need.

(*e*) Hoping for His approval and recompense.

II.—The Motives.

1. Imitation of noble example (viii. 1-5). Macedonian giving:

(*a*) Out of poverty, not affluence.

(*b*) According to, and beyond, ability.

(*c*) Voluntary and even enthusiastic.

2. Full complement of graces (viii. 7); (comp. 2 Pet. i. 5-8) abound in *this* grace also.

3. Practical test and proof of love.

(*a*) Love both proven and developed by self-sacrifice.

(*b*) Love's sacrifice, not obligatory, but voluntary.

4. The Christ Likeness (viii. 9).

(*a*) His self-oblivion.

(*b*) Like self-denial, inspired by gratitude for what he has done.

5. The good name of the church.

(*a*) Exhibition of practical fellowship.

(*b*) Justification of the Apostle's hope.

(*c*) Fulfilment of obligations he assumed for them.

6. Contagion of a true zeal (ix. 2).

Stimulates others to giving.

7. Glory of God (ix. 11-15).

(*a*) In the effect on the recipient.

(*b*) In the effect on the giver.

(*c*) In the unity and community of love.

In the "Speaker's Commentary" it is suggested that the "unspeakable gift" may be not the gift of Christ, but the gift of this grace of giving whereby the Church on earth is thus knit together in the bonds of heaven.

The Glory of Grace

"To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved;

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."—*Ephesians i.* 6-7. (Compare verses 22, 33.)

THIS Epistle is especially rich in the exhibition and illustration of GRACE, and these words epitomise its contents. The central word is *Redemption*—one of the key words of the Bible, found with its equivalents about one hundred and twenty, or thirty, times. The Bible is the book of Redemption, a pictorial history of it, with a progress of doctrine from Genesis to Revelation. Its root idea is deliverance by the payment of a redemption price. Hence the prominence of *Ransom,* which is always *Blood,* because "the Blood is the life." (Deut. xii. 23.)

All bloody sacrifices suggest *a life for a life.* Either an innocent life for a guilty life forfeited, as in the sin and trespass offerings; or a ransomed life given back in return and acknowledgment of the vicarious offering, as in the whole burnt offering. Compare Levit. i.-viii.; 1 Peter i. 18, etc.

Redemption by such a *Ransom* involves a twofold *Result:* Forgiveness of sins, and acceptance in the Beloved. The forgiveness is peculiarly abundant, full, free, complete, practically annihilating offences—"blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us," etc. Colos. ii. 14. The reference is to the Year of Jubilee in which there was a restoration of lost estate, emancipation from bondage, and cancellation of debt. But he who would study the whole pictorial presentation of Redemption in the Old Testament must look at it in the light of three great festivals: the Passover (Exod. xii.), the Day

of Atonement (Levit. xvi.), and the Year of Jubilee (Lev. xxv.). The joint result of all exhibits the new "standing" of the forgiven sinner, and the preparation for the new walk with God.

The other aspect of Redemptive result is *identification with the Redeemer's personality.* "In *whom* we have Redemption," etc.—it is not a pardoning process merely, but the creation of a personal bond.

This is best exhibited in chap. v. 22-33, where the Redeemed church is shown as the Bride of Christ. And *seven* aspects of His Marital Love are exhibited: He *loved* the church and *gave Himself* for it; He *washed* and *sanctified* it; He *nourishes* and *cherishes* it, and He *presents* it to Himself. This is all faintly foreshadowed in the book of Ruth, where the *goël* or Redeemer appears in Boaz. In 1 Cor. iii. 21 to 23 the Bride's inventory is to be found.

To such a Redemption, with such a Ransom, such Result, such a Redeemer, we must add the one and only *Reason*—Grace. Infinite Love alone (2 Sam. xiv. 14). And so jealous is God of this grace that all attempt to earn or merit or deserve salvation by works forfeits it altogether, and is itself a wicked work insulting and outraging the glory of grace.

A Notable Psalm

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want," etc.—*Psalm xxiii.*

This psalm is most remarkable as expressing both New Testament and Old Testament conceptions of discipleship. Up to the end of verse 4, the figure is that of a sheep under care of the shepherd; from this point on, that of a son in his father's house, or at least a subject in the palace of a king, or a guest with his host.

The precise difference in the two dispensations is thus

here expressed. To the Old Testament saint God was a Shepherd; to the New Testament saint, He is a Father, Sovereign, Host, all in one. And it is not accident, surely, that at the point of transition we find a *table* and an *anointing;* for it is at the table of the Lord that the Old Testament Passover passes into the New Testament Lord's Supper; and at the Pentecost Anointing that the disciple first apprehends fully the Sonship in his Father's House. It is, furthermore, noticeable that the idea of a blissful immortality it was reserved for the New Testament to unfold fully. It was but dimly hinted in the older times; but after the Lord's Supper and Pentecost it came to be clearly revealed and understood. The Death and Resurrection of Christ, His Ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit, were the necessary preliminaries to its full disclosure. So that this Psalm becomes a sort of enigma of both dispensations.

Unconscious Character

"An excellent spirit was in him."—*Daniel vi.* 3.

Of all the encomiums upon Daniel, this, which is perhaps the highest, does not concern at all what he *did,* but what he *was,* and, most of all, what he was in that deepest of all the secret chambers of being—*the spirit*—which here can mean nothing less than the whole realm of motive, temper, disposition—the *involuntary* and *unconscious* man. Observe that in the spirit of a man, lies,

I.—The inmost essence of *Personality.* Histories and biographies often tell us what men have done, but fail to reveal what they have been. The spirit evades the limner's art and the photographer's camera, and the writer's pen. It is too subtle, and often too secret. Even

when discovered it defies description. It can be felt better than formulated. But here lies the true man.

II.—The inmost secret of *Influence*. It is not mere words or outward acts and deeds that move men, but the involuntary character that unconsciously gives to the eye a magic look, to the features a strange charm; to the voice a certain tone, and to the whole manner at once a majestic authority and a matchless persuasion. In fact, the most eloquent speech may be absolutely made null by the unconscious spirit behind it.

III.—Therefore, also, the inmost quality of all *action*. Our works are by God judged by the spirit of the worker. There are two sorts of speech, the literal and the spiritual, and often the latter is practically louder than the former, and drowns its voice. And so there are two general outlets of the man, and inlets too, and that which most surely goes out and comes in follows the hidden channels.

Let us note a few inferences.

1. Everywhere the *most potent* forces are the *most noiseless*. In nature, light, heat, gravity, attraction, and that greatest of all forces, Life, are absolutely silent and unseen. Even light is only known by its effects. And so in character.

2. That which, therefore, *most needs guarding* and *ennobling* is the heart. Out of it flow the issues of life. The supreme care is to be the inmost character. We must scrutinise motive. Our only hope is inward renewal.

3. That which also *finally determines destiny* is the spirit of the man. Its affinities will decide its affiliations: Every man to his own company. Heaven and Hell are *states*. Condition depends on character. Even God cannot make happy one whose spirit is wrong. (John iii. 1-7.)

Compare Horace Bushnell on "Unconscious Influence."

The Starting Point in Salvation

"Even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."—1 *Thess. i.* 10.

HERE is the *starting point* in salvation: *Deliverance from wrath,* ever-impending—actually overhanging the evil-doer, because God is a just and a holy God, and holy wrath is with Him not a transient impulse, a *passion,* but an eternal antagonism to all evil, a *principle.*

The first necessity is that, from this Just and Holy Wrath of God, which, because of its very perfection, threatens immediate and inevitable judgment on sin, the transgressor should be delivered: and here salvation *begins.* Hence the first of the great Festivals of the Hebrews, that which marked the beginning of months in the sacred year, was the *Passover.* At that, the one thought was deliverance from wrath.

The words of Jehovah are explicit: "I will pass through the land of Egypt, this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt will *I execute judgment.* And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are, and *when I see the blood I will pass over you.*" (Exod. xii. 12, 13.)

This theme may be profitably introduced by this historical and typical forecast, and then effectively presented from the following points of view:

1. The Sinner's Peril: the fact and nature of sin and guilt.

2. The Divine Judgment: the necessary outcome of the perfection of God.

3. The Work of Deliverance: the necessity of blood atonement, and the principle of Substitution.

4. The perpetual Plea of the Blood. (Heb. xii. 24.)

5. The absolute security of him who takes refuge under the sprinkled blood.

The Pilgrim's Progress

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts."—1 *Peter ii.* 11.

"Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear."—1 *Peter i.* 17.

Peter wrote "The Pilgrim's Progress" from this world to the next, long before Bunyan was in Bedford Jail; and Moses had recorded, long before Peter, the stages of that Progress, in the history of the Exodus. Peter's use of the words, translated "pilgrims," "strangers," "sojourners," is conspicuous. A *pilgrim* is a traveller to another country, *sojourning* as over-night, a *stranger* in an enemy's land. It becomes very plain, before we have read through Peter's Epistles to the Elect Dispersion, that he has in mind the forty years' wandering from Egypt to Canaan. Fifty points of correspondence may easily be traced, where these two Epistles can best be interpreted by close examination of the Pentateuch. We may select a few of these obvious correspondences:—

1. The *Start*—Redemption by blood (1 Peter i. 18, 19).
2. The *Girded Loins*—the pilgrim's attire. (1 Peter i. 13).
3. The *Pillar of Cloud and Fire* (2 Peter i. 19).
4. The *Rearing of the Tabernacle* (1 Peter ii. 5).
5. The Pilgrim's *Warfare* (comp. Amalek) (1 Peter ii. 12).
6. The Pilgrim's *Leader* (Joshua) (1 Peter ii. 21).
7. The Pilgrim's *Entrance* (2 Peter i. 10, 11).
8. The Pilgrim's *Inheritance* (1 Peter i. 4, 5; 2 Peter iii. 13).

Double Mindedness

"A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.—*James i.* 8.

Διψυχος—double-minded—a curious word; two-souled—one soul directed towards God, the other towards something else; as if there were a double nature in the one man, each antagonising the other, or at least refusing

to act co-ordinately. The word is found here and in chapter iv. 8, for the first time in all Greek literature. The same thought is typically found in Leviticus xi. 20, and Deut. xiv. 10.

"All fowls that creep going upon all four shall be an abomination to you."

"Every creeping thing that flieth is unclean unto you."

Here we have the same essential principle, differently stated. In the one case, every fowl that is also a reptile, in the other every reptile that is also a fowl, is pronounced unclean and abominable. Why is this? Paul tells us there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. (1 Cor. xv. 39.) In God's eyes these are different forms of animal nature and life, and the combination makes *both imperfect;* neither can reach a perfect development or do a perfect work. A flying reptile or a creeping fowl can neither do first-class creeping nor first-class flying. Either function must be imperfectly performed, for the anatomy of the organism is neither the complete anatomy of bird or reptile. And this is typical of the two-souled man who at once tries to creep on earth and soar towards heaven. He is neither wholly a worldling nor wholly a disciple. He belongs to the mixed multitude. He is not sufficiently absorbed in either this world or the next to be of much use in either. God says of all lukewarm disciples, "I would thou wert cold or hot—so then because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev. iii. 15, 16; 2 Kings xvii. 33).

The Fourfold Man

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all they heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."—*Mark xii.* 30.

This is the only case in which these four are found together. They seem designed to cover the whole constitu-

tion of man and to be used here in some peculiar sense not necessarily to be discovered from other cases where these words are used separately. Their being used together here is itself an indication that they mark shades of distinction and discrimination, not necessarily intended when they are found separately, where a more comprehensive meaning is made necessary by the context.

The most mature study of the science of man as an intellectual and moral being has led to the grouping of his great dominant faculties under four heads:—Intellect, affections, sensibilities, and will. By the intellect is meant the thinking faculty, by the affections the emotional nature, by the sensibilities the moral, or conscience, and by the will the volitional.

To apply this four-fold division here will, we think, be found the most helpful in interpretation of this somewhat difficult text—understanding by the heart the conscience, by the soul the affections, by the mind the intellect, and by the strength the will. So understood, the love of God is seen to be the joint product of

1. A *knowledge* of His nature and Being.
2. Response of *affection* to His excellence.
3. A sense of *moral obligation* to worship and obey.
4. A surrender of *will,* or the actual yielding of the whole being to Him.

This whole conception should be transferred to the second great command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Love is in both cases the same essential principle of self-oblivion, preferring others above self, and the same four-fold faculties should enter into it:

1. An intelligent knowledge of our neighbour and his needs.
2. An unselfish love and sympathy toward him.
3. A sense of obligation to relieve his wants and promote his welfare.
4. A deliberate resolve to fulfil our whole duty.

Applied, for example, to missions, this law of love de-

mands information first of all, then sympathetic love for man as man; then the recognition of duty, and so, the full engagement of all the active energies and powers in service.

Christ's Fourfold Work

"Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."—1 *Cor. i.* 30.

This is the only text that in four consecutive leading words presents the complete view of Christ's redemptive work. It reminds us of the first time in which the four cardinal points of the compass are emphasised in Scripture, when Abram, for God's sake, separated from Lot, letting him have the best of the land (Gen. xiii. 14). Here God seems to say to the disciple, who for holiness' sake separates himself from sin unto God, "Lift up thine eyes, and look northward and southward and eastward and westward: for all which thou seest, to thee will I give it, for ever."

Here are the cardinal points in the spiritual landscape, and they take in the whole horizon of Christ's work for our salvation; and the *order* again is inviolable.

I.—*Wisdom.* Here Christ's work begins; otherwise we should neither know ourselves nor God. In three ways He becomes to us "wisdom from God," as the passage should read.

1. By *correcting* our errors of opinion and practice.
2. By *confirming* what is right and good.
3. By *revealing* what has hitherto been unknown.

II.—*Righteousness.*

1. By His own perfect *obedience* to the Law.
2. By His vicarious and justifying *Death* for sin.
3. By His *intercession* at God's right hand.

III.—*Sanctification.*

1. By a perfect *example* of holiness.
2. By *Regeneration,* imparting the new nature.
3. By the gift of the *indwelling Spirit* of holiness.

IV.—*Redemption.*

1. By Resurrection of the *Body,* redemption of the body.
2. By final and full deliverance from sin, redemption of *Spirit.*
3. By ushering us, body and spirit, into the Heavenly *Home.*

The Fourfold Uses of Scripture

"Profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."—*2 Timothy iii.* 16.

Here again four consecutive words embrace the whole realm of Scripture profit, and again the order is a part of the inspiration.

I.—*Doctrine.* The word means teaching.

It covers the same ground as *Wisdom,* in the preceding outline of Christ's work. As a Teacher, He

1. Corrects our errors (comp. Matt. v. 21-48).
2. Confirms our right convictions.
3. Reveals new truths.

II.—*Reproof.* This word seems to refer to the work on the *conscience,* as the preceding has to do with the understanding.

1. Compelling the consciousness of sin and guilt.
2. Bringing us before the court of conscience (Rom. ii. 15).
3. Constraining to a new rectitude.

III.—*Correction.* This is not an easy word to render. It seems to carry the idea of reconstruction—setting up fallen man on his feet—restoring him.

1. Discovering the only true foundation (Luke vi. 48).
2. Building character and conduct with right materials.
3. Out of ruins constructing a Temple of God.

IV.—*Instruction* in Righteousness. This is teaching, like the first, but it belongs, not to the initial, but to the advanced stage. It is the teaching that fully equips for duty and service.

1. It is knowledge of the mysteries of God.
2. It is knowledge of the secrets of spiritual power.
3. It is the full furnishing for service.

Secrets of Victory

"But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."—*James iv. 6, 7.*

"Submit"—"Resist." Here are two words, and in a fixed order. "Submit yourselves therefore to God." Why? Because "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." Only he who submits to God is prepared to resist the devil, because in alliance with God.

Pride is the essence and root of all sin, for it is *self-will.* It is the spirit of lawlessness, which is the spirit of the devil. He fell through pride. Pride resists God and compels God as a Holy Being and Sovereign to resist pride; and, of course, such pride is madness, flinging oneself upon the bosses of Jehovah's buckler!

Every man must choose his position and attitude; either

to submit to God or to resist Him. But let him know this, that if he resists God he submits to the devil, and if he submits to God he resists the devil; the two parties are eternally and irreconcilably hostile.

The order is almost equally important; one must submit to God *in order* to resist the devil. All efforts to resist him are vain until one submits to God. Only grace is sufficient to cope with such an adversary, and God "giveth grace to the humble," the submissive. The moment we take the attitude of surrender to God we have the whole Godhead on our side, and form an alliance with God. In this affiance and alliance with God lies our whole hope of defiance and defeat of evil.

The Bible teaches us that *Satan* has great power over men who do not submit to God. He works in three ways: first through the *flesh* by appeals to its lusts; second, through the world by using things temporal and visible to shut out the eternal (Coleridge and "Wooden Arches"); third, by direct suggestion, fiery darts, diabolical suggestions of doubt and hatred, and even blasphemy. We must not forget that Satan has given to him power of inflicting disease and death. There is therefore Satanic territory within which he is permitted for the time to exercise peculiar power. There is, on the other hand, territory where God's power is peculiarly exercised and Satanic malice foiled. Hence Christ warns us, "*enter ye not into temptation.*" Comp. Book of Ruth, etc., Elimelech going into forbidden land of Moab.

How far one may have immunity from *Satanic power* is one of the gravest questions of this or any age. It must be studied in the light of many Scriptures, such as Psalm xci., Hosea ii. 18, Covenant with beasts. Mark i. 13, Isaiah xi. 6-9, xxxv. 8-10, John xiv. 30, "The Prince of *this world* cometh and hath nothing in Me." 1 Cor. ix. 27, "I keep the body under," etc.

Christ Life in Us

"Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."—*Galatians ii.* 20.

THIS passage is wholly unique. It represents Christ as so indwelling as to become the believer's own LIFE. There is no mistaking this thought, which permeates the whole epistle. In chap. i. 16, we meet the expression, "To reveal His Son *in* me"; and in iv. 19, the kindred expression, "Christ be formed *in* you," and here "Christ liveth *in* me." The idea of our being crucified *with* Christ is also something beyond Christ being crucified *for* us. In the latter case Christ is on the Cross and the believer in Him judicially; in the former the believer is on the Cross and Christ in him actually, as the source and strength of His crucified life.

Here we have the general thought of this close *identity* with the Lord even in His Crucifixion, so that we are in Him and He is in us. From this follow the other great thoughts of this Epistle.

I.—VITALITY. I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me. The identity is so complete that even His faith becomes ours: "I live by the *faith of* the Son of God." This expression we find only in seven cases: Romans iii. 3, 22, Gal. ii. 16 (twice), 20, iii. 22, Philip iii. 9.

II.—ENERGY. This life principle is the secret of a new activity, not of the flesh but of the Spirit, not legal but gracious. Comp. works of the law and fruit of the Spirit —works being done with effort and fruit being borne without effort.

III.—MATURITY. Growth depends on this Christ-life in us. Comp. iii. 26—iv. 7. Here the contrast is between servants and minor children, and full-grown *sons*. All

legalism and carnalism hinder and prevent growth. Old Testament saints knew almost nothing of God's Fatherhood in Christ.

IV.—Liberty, iv. 8—v. 13. This follows upon the rest. For example, while the legal spirit survives, we are in bondage to the law (*a*) as our accuser, fearing its condemning power; or (*b*) as our vindicator, vainly hoping in its justifying power; and the carnal spirit brings us in bondage to our lusts, etc.

V.—Fertility, v. 22—vi. 10. The Fruit of the Spirit—note, not the *fruits*—singular, because they all develop like grapes in one cluster. And not only fruit but continuous and multiplying harvests; God's double law of harvest. We reap *like* in quality, but *multiplied* in quantity.

VI.—Sanctity, v. 16-24. Two very inspiring thoughts (1) The Spirit's desires antagonising and overcoming those of the flesh; and (2) the voluntary crucifixion of the flesh—"have crucified"—the only place of the use of the *active* voice, implying a personal and voluntary act, in painfully putting to death the fleshly desires.

VII.—Humility, vi. 14. Seen (1) in utter indifference to all the world's honours and awards; (2) in rendering all glory to Him who is our life and strength.

The Inspired Word

"All scripture is God-in-breathed."—2 *Timothy iii.* 16.
(*θεοπνευστος*—God-in-spirited.)

The inspiration of Holy Scripture is only another phrase to express its Living quality.

There seems a plain reference here to the creation of

man. (Genesis ii.) There we are told that God formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives, and man became a living soul.

The Bible, the body of Holy Scripture, is here conceived of as a body, Divinely inbreathed. The Lord formed the book out of the materials of human language, but He breathed into it the breath of His own life and it became a Living book. It is significantly called "the Living oracles." (Acts vii. 38.) It is said to be living and powerful. (Hebrews iv. 12.) And said to live and abide for ever. (1 Peter i. 23.)

Taking these passages together we are taught that the word of God is a living book; that it speaks as with a living voice; that it has power to communicate life, and that it has an indestructible life like its Author.

The figure suggested is very fruitful in instruction. It puts the Bible before us as a Living Body, inhabited and pervaded by a Divine Life.

This implies that the Holy Scriptures constitute a *unit,* and that

1. This is a Living or vital Unit.
2. This is a complex unit.
3. This is a consistent unit.
4. This is a complete unit.
5. This is a systematic unit.
6. This is an organic unit.
7. This is an indestructible unit.

As a living unit it is pervaded by Life, *i.e.,* Life is everywhere found in it, as in any other living body. The body of a bird is pervaded by life. It can fly because where the wings begin the Life does not stop, but extends its vital current throughout the pinions to the utmost tip and minutest feather. The breath of life fills even the bones, and being warmed by the animal heat of the bird, makes them lighter than the surrounding atmosphere, and hence helps the bird to float on the air. When man seeks to fly, where the wings which he attaches to

his body *begin,* Life *ends.* The wings of the man are substitutes, the wings of the bird are attributes.

Putting Off and Putting On

"But . . . put off all these—put on."—*Col. iii.* 8, 12.

In Ephesians God shows us the standard of His power in our sanctification (i. 19-23). In Colossians there is a beautiful corresponding lesson on the *new man and his new attire.*

Christ's miraculous Birth, Temptation, Crucifixion, Burial, Resurrection and Ascension, and Session are typical of similar experiences of the believer. (Col. ii. 10—iii. 4.) In Burial and Resurrection, a beautiful lesson is beautifully taught. When Christ died His raiment was distributed among the soldiers, and but for the linen wrappings of the tomb His body would have been laid in the sepulchre naked. When he rose he left even these wrappings behind. Whence, then, came his garments on the third day? Were they not miraculously provided, as became the Prince of Life? His new and immortal form demanded new and celestial robing. Believers are risen with Him and the new man demands new habits. This thought pervades the second and third chapters of this Epistle. The old man of sin crucified and buried with Him, is contrasted with the new man, created in righteousness and true holiness, received from and in Him. And the garments of the old man, like the cerements of the tomb, are to be put off with the old man; and such attire as belongs to the new man and becomes it, we are exhorted to put on, as becometh saints. Let us mark the contrast:—

Ye have put off the OLD MAN *with his deeds.*

Put off all these *also:* (iii. 5-7).

1. Anger.
2. Wrath.
3. Malice.
4. Blasphemy.
5. Filthy Communication out of your mouth.
6. Lie not one to another.

(The Deeds of the Old Man are mentioned separately.)

Mortify your Members which are upon the earth.

1. Fornication.
2. Uncleanness.
3. Inordinate Affection.
4. Evil Concupiscence.
5. Covetousness, which is Idolatry.

In the which (as garments) ye also *walked,* some time when ye *lived* in them.

Here are eleven things to be put off—

Within these all included which have to do with our inordinate desires, greed, unholy tempers, and tongues.

6. "With his *deeds.*"

Thus everything in the outer life, the conduct, the speech; also the inward tempers and frames of mind—whatsoever is of evil, or of the devil, is to be absolutely put off—wholly renounced and abandoned.

And have put on the NEW MAN which is renewed in knowledge, etc. (iii. 10).

Put on, therefore, as the Elect of God, holy and beloved.

1. Bowels of Mercies.
2. Kindness.
3. Humbleness of Mind.
4. Meekness.
5. Longsuffering.
6. Forbearing and Forgiving.
7. Outside of all these, LOVE, which is the girdle of perfection (holding all in place).

Seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

Seat your affections on things above.

For ye have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Let the Peace of God *rule* (be umpire—arbitrate) in *your hearts.*

Let the *Word of Christ dwell* in you richly in all wisdom, and *whatsoever ye do,* do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

1. Seek; 2. Seat; 3. Let Peace rule in hearts.
4. Let the Word of Christ dwell.
5. Whatsoever ye *do,* etc.

Here everything is included—temper, tongue, affections regulated in God—and deeds.

Christ the Antitype of all Sacrifices

"He hath made him to be sin for us—who knew no sin."—*2 Cor. v.* 21.

"Christ . . . hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."—*Ephes. v.* 2.

These texts, set side by side, present our Lord Jesus Christ as the all-comprehensive sacrifice and offering, in Himself fulfilling the double forecast both of the ill-savour sin and trespass offerings, and the sweet savour meal offerings, peace-offerings, and burnt-offerings. All five met in Him.

In the first two, of ill-savour, the life of the innocent victim is given up to the fires of Judgment in substitution for the guilty. In the latter three, of sweet savour, the life of the redeemed and ransomed is given back to the Ransomer. All these sacrifices and offerings point primarily, not to the believer but to the Lord Jesus, because it is *in Him* that all is accomplished. He is first made sin for us, and then in Him we are made the righteousness of God.

But these are the grand mountain summits from which to view our two-fold relation to our Lord.

1. In Him dying, and suffering the penalty, at once judicially expiating and actually escaping.

2. In Him living and offering ourselves unto God, judicially accepted in the beloved, and actually partaking of His Holiness.

3. Here we have a hint of the relation between His atoning death and interceding life; and between our justification, sanctification, and glorification.

The Holy Spirit in the Believer

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God? And that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?"—1 *Cor. iii.* 16.

Here is an unequivocal statement that the body of believers constitutes the Temple of God (ναος) and that in them the Holy Spirit makes His abode. What is here said of the collective body is afterwards affirmed of the individual believer (vi. 19, 20), it being a peculiar fact in the spiritual realm that what is true of the whole is also true of the individual parts. And how sacred this indwelling of the Spirit makes this temple may be seen from the fact that the word used is not ιερον but ναος, the latter word being applied to the very shrine itself, the holiest of all, the sacred cube of the Shekinah.

This phrase, "The Spirit of God dwelleth in you," is the key-note of both Epistles to the Corinthians. Comp. 1 Cor. vi. 17. "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." The spirit of the man and the Spirit of the Lord are conceived as being merged in one—the highest expression conceivable of an indissoluble unity.

Obviously certain consequences follow: there must be a mighty impression made upon the believer's whole being by such holy wedlock with the Divine Spirit. In a sense the attributes of God must reproduce themselves in the character of the child of God, according to his measure of capacity. This is the precise teaching of these two Epistles, and may be said to constitute their central theme.

For example:—

1. God's Omniscience imparting supernatural wisdom and knowledge of divine things (1 Cor. ii. iii.).

2. God's Righteousness restraining and forbidding all impurity and desecration of the body (v. vi.).

3. God's Providence determining and hallowing even secular calling and bodily work (vii. viii.).

4. God's Love pervading the body of believers, and developing mutual love and helpfulness (xii. xiii. xiv.).

5. God's Eternal Life leaving its impress even on the body—assuring its resurrection (xv.).

6. God's Power, transforming the whole character into His image (2 Cor. iii. iv. v.).

7. God's Holiness separating the believer from all idols, inducing godly repentance, etc. (vi. vii.).

8. God's Benevolence developing a high type of Christian giving (viii. ix.).

9. God's Patience enabling us even in affliction to resign ourselves to His discipline and rejoice in it (xi. xii.).

10. God's Perfection finally assuring the perfecting of His saints (xiii.).

This analysis might be carried much further with profit, but this suffices to show the trend of thought, which might be profitably developed in a score or more of sermons.

Christian Perfection

"This also we wish, even your perfection."—*2 Cor. xiii.* 9, 11.

The New Testament teaching on this subject deserves careful study. There is a *judicial* perfection, inseparable from our standing in Christ. "Ye *are* complete in Him" (Colos. ii. 10).—a present condition. There is also a *final* perfection to be realised only at His appearing. (1 John iii. 2.) "We *shall* be like Him." But there is another perfection, *actual,* present, progressive, dependent on the Spirit's indwelling and inworking. This is referred to here, in the "wish," and in the command "Be perfect."

The word "perfect" is found about forty times in the New Testament, and is the rendering of two words, τελειος, καταρτισις. The former is in two-thirds of cases the word used, and carries the idea of *conformity to a purpose* or *end* in view, fulfilling God's design. "That ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."

(Colos. iv. 12.) "That ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." (James i. 4.) God would have no lack *of* any part, and no lack *in* any part.

The other word, καταρτισις, has reference to *articulation,* as in the bones of a joint—a being adjusted so as to fit into one's place and be knit together with other parts.

Both these words suggest useful lessons. There are *three* sorts of perfection, to be set before us as the object of daily endeavour:—

1. *Completeness*—never content while there is anything lacking.

2. *Growth*—that there be no arrested development. Note the figures used, such as that of the building advancing toward the completion, the seed ripening to fruitfulness, the child growing to maturity, the racer attaining the goal.

3. *Adjustment*—seeking in all things to meet, fit into, and fulfil God's mind.

There is a *gradual* progress, seen in three directions: increasing knowledge of God, progress in holy walk with Him, and fuller equipment for service.

There is, however, an *immediate* perfection: as when the *will* is fully surrendered to Him, as when some *hindrance* is promptly removed, or as when His Word is used as a lamp for the next step and every step.

Three warnings may be added: (1) Beware of being content with imperfection. (2) Never continue in any known sin. (3) Stem the current, or you will be carried away by it.

The Virtue of Silence

"If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of Thy children."—*Psalm lxxiii.* 15.

This is a unique text, expressing a thought nowhere else so directly conveyed in words, and it is significantly found

at the centre of this Psalm, and markes the exact turning point.

This "Psalm of Asaph" is an outbreathing of scepticism. Like many others, he stumbled at the mysteries of Providence; he saw the wicked prospering and the righteous suffering, and the prosperity of the one and the adversity of the other continuing sometimes until the end of their days. Two natural results followed: (1) He began to doubt God's moral government of the world; and (2) he began to question how far it is worth while to maintain one's integrity against such awful odds. The first half of the Psalm is taken up with these morbid reflections. These verses embody the great problem which every believer has been compelled to confront, and which, apart from the Revelation of God, has no adequate solution. There, however, the answer to such doubts and difficulties is fully found.

1. The Word of God shows us the respective *ends* of a godly and ungodly life. This world is the vestibule to a great Hereafter, and the equality and equity of God's Providential dealing can only be seen when the final destiny of both classes is considered.

2. It shows us that, even in this life, there is a compensation for godliness, in the divine satisfaction of the soul in God.

The point of this text is that, although one may not always be able to prevent morbid doubts and misgivings, he may *suppress their utterance.* Freed from mere idiomatic phrases, the writer intimates that he kept to himself his inward questionings lest by their expression he should cause others to stumble, or perhaps mislead and deceive them. He asked himself whether frankly to speak what was passing within would not tend to encourage the suggestions of unbelief and doubt in fellow believers.

Three reasons are suggested here for suppressing, instead of expressing, all inward doubts and misgivings as

to Divine truth, or the harmony of facts with Scripture teaching:—

1. They are the result of partial knowledge both of truth and of fact. We should wait for fuller insight.

2. They have the effect of disturbing, if not destroying, faith in others, and especially the weak.

3. They become more controlling in our own lives when we give them expression, which only emphasises them.

4. They argue a low level of spiritual life. Their true antidote is a closer walk with God.

Treatment of Doubt

"Except I shall see . . . I will not believe.
"Be not faithless, but believing."—*John xx. 25, 27.*

THERE is an almost universal prevalence of religious doubt. This scripture suggests a study of it, as a phenomenon; its sources and its remedies. We append a few hints merely, which we have found very helpful in dealing with men.

Sources of Doubt: These are mental, moral, spiritual, and even physical.

1. *Physical:* mind and body are closely and vitally related. Certain diseases, notably those which have their seat in the lower part of the trunk, kidneys, liver, etc., dispose to depression, and often a physician is more needful than a minister. A healthy body is very helpful to a normal religious life.

2. *Mental.* Arising either from ignorance or intelligence. If from ignorance, it is to be met with rational information and evidence. If from intelligence, it is more difficult to reach, as it is prone to spring from intellectual pride and self-sufficiency. Where ignorance does exist, it is, of course, the first difficulty to be got

out of the way. There is ample evidence of Christianity, but it needs to be known and weighed. The argument from prophecy, for instance, is unanswerable. Study Bishop McIlvaine's "Evidences," etc.

Often doubters are unreasonable, as when they absurdly clamour for "mathematical" evidence on moral questions. Sometimes a still more unreasoning prejudice is the obstacle, assuming all supernatural revelation impossible, and so rejecting as myth all prediction and miracle.

3. *Moral.* The presence of an accusing conscience makes it an object to be sceptical. Truth revolutionises a wrong life if it is let alone. Hence evil-doers hate light. (John iii.) A heart that for any cause is alien to God will be disposed to reject the gospel. Faith and righteousness are inseparably linked. Sin begets and *is* a disposition to disbelieve and deny truth. Psalm xiv. 1. 1 Tim. i. 19. The only remedy is a moral reformation. Intellectual demonstration is of little use; it is like trying to cure blind eyes by an operation on the ears.

4. *Spiritual.* Even where conversion has taken place, disobedience brings darkness. The carelessness that neglects prayer and Bible study is directly productive of spiritual night. We must walk in the light if we are not to get into darkness.

Hence the *Remedy* must correspond with the disease.

1. *Candour.* Intellectual and moral honesty. Impartiality in the weighing of evidence, and welcoming light, however much it may expose and rebuke evil within.

There are some maxims of great importance:—Always cultivate intellectual honesty—a candid mind open to conviction, and free from all unfair bias.

No amount of light will avail for a closed or blind eye.

Bigotry causes the mind to contract in presence of evidence, as the eye contracts under light.

2. *Conservatism.* Hold fast whatever truth you have until it is clearly proven to be falsehood or error. "Believe your beliefs and doubt your doubts." Never make the mistake of believing your doubts and doubting your beliefs. Paley cautions us not to let what we do not know lessen faith in what we do know, and Butler reminds us that objections cannot invalidate a fact, for the fact rests on knowledge and the objections on ignorance.

3. *Consecration.* A holy walk with God both makes one disposed to see and respond to truth, and, still better, widens the experimental field of evidence, making possible new and personal proofs in the realms of one's own experience—as in prayer.

Influence of One Bad Man

"One sinner destroyeth much good."—*Eccles. ix.* 18.

This is one of the concluding sentences of what may be an allegory, which begins at verse 13, in which the little flock of believers—the Church—is represented as a little city, with a few citizens, against which Satan, the great king, comes with his hosts and engines of war and builds great bulwarks that he may besiege it and compel surrender; but the one poor wise man, the Lord Jesus, by his wisdom delivers the city. Here every sinner is represented as being in league with the Devil, doing the work of destruction and not construction; and as the one poor wise man works a great deliverance, the one sinner destroys much good. Apparently the allegory extends into the next chapter, the first verse of which seems to carry on the thought, that even the good and wise saint may injure his otherwise pure and wholesome influence by the little folly and inconsistency that is like a dead fly in the fragrant ointment.

The thought of the Destructiveness of Sin, taken

out of its connection, is, however, very valuable and suggestive. It may be considered:—

1. NEGATIVELY. The good prevented.
2. POSITIVELY. The evil done.
3. CONSCIOUSLY. What is wrought voluntarily.
4. UNCONSCIOUSLY. What is the involuntary effect.
5. IMMEDIATELY. The direct result of sin.
6. REMOTELY. The final harvest of evil.

Sin, thus considered, may be seen to be *suicidal* to one's own best interests and happiness—*homicidal* as to the well being of our fellow men, and *regicidal* as destructive of the very rule and existence of God, were it not met by a power greater than man's, for every sin is in effect a raised hand, clenched fist, and a blow in the face of God.

The history of JEROBOAM seems to be spread over the pages of the Word of God, for the very purpose of illustrating and emphasising this awful truth and will amply repay careful and minute study as showing the *widespread and far-reaching influence of the example of one bad man.*

The fullest résumé of this career and its results is in 2 Kings xvii. 21-23. *"Jeroboam drave Israel from following the Lord, and made them sin a great sin. For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not therefrom,* UNTIL *the Lord removed Israel out of His sight."*

This man—the first King of the Ten Tribes, after the division of the Kingdom—though raised to the throne by Jehovah Himself, with special promises of Divine favour if he was loyal to Him, at once began a series of alarming departures from the prescribed path of duty. Following the devices of his own heart, he introduced the worship of Jehovah under forbidden symbols—the Golden calves at Dan and Bethel—violating the second command in order to keep the kingdom divided by destroying the *unity of worship.* This led to a *second*

innovation—the erection of a *new priesthood* out of the lower class of people, as the Levites dared not lend themselves to such profanation. This led to a *third* daring deviation from God's order, transferring the Feast of Tabernacles to a month later in the year, probably for the convenience of harvesting. And he crowned the whole of this impious career by himself *acting as High Priest* at such festival, imitating the arrogance of Egyptian Kings who united regal and sacerdotal offices in themselves.

Between Jeroboam and Hoshea, last of the Kings of Israel, lay a period of two hundred and fifty years, with *seventeen different* successors to the kingly dignity, and every one of the seventeen, without exception, "walked in the ways of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who sinned and made Israel to sin"; so that this becomes the *stereotyped charge* against this whole line of Apostate Sovereigns. At least twenty-four times the charge is repeated—a like repetition nowhere else occurring in Scripture, and thus standing alone to impress all readers with the terrible lesson taught as to the *persistency* and *perpetuity* of an evil example. (Compare 1 Kings xiv. 16; xv. 26, 30, 34; xvi. 2, 13, 19, 26, 31; xxii. 52; 2 Kings iii. 3; viii. 18; x. 29, 31; xiii. 2, 6, 11; xiv. 24; xv. 9, 18, 24, 28; xvii. 21-23.)

It is notable also that *Ahab*, the worst of all this line of Kings, was, by Jeroboam's example, emboldened to go further and openly *violate* the *first* of all commandments by introducing the worship of false Pagan deities—Baal and Astarte, or Jupiter and Venus, the sun god and moon god, with their shocking sensuality.

Surely it is true that "*one sinner destroyeth much good.*"

"He who thus starts a stream of evil influence cannot arrest or restrain it. It is like a flood, finding a hole in a dam, and making the hole larger and larger as it sweeps through."

Christ Filling the Universe

"That He might fill all."—*Ephes. iv.* 10 (*ἱνα πληρώση τα παντα*).

This is a very emphatic expression, and may be rendered, "that He might fill the whole universe." The quotation from Psalm lxviii. 17-20 is manifestly Messianic. It represents countless myriads of angels as attendant upon His Person—twenty thousand multiplied by a thousand, and this again by a thousand—20,000,000,000. It is a scene of a captor and his captives, and here we have suggested that the Captor is the Messianic Conqueror, and his captives are all the foes of God and man—the Devil and his hosts, Death and Hades, and rebellious men. Moreover, the Messianic King received of the Father, and distributed to His Church, the consummate gift, inclusive of all others, the Holy Spirit, so that even former rebels become temples of God. And so the grand ultimate effect and result are that He fills the whole universe with His victories:

1. *Hades,* to which He descended that He might be Lord of death and the grave and the under world, and lead forth a multitude of redeemed captives.

2. *Earth,* with which He became identified as Son of Man, living on it, that he might be Lord of earth and rule there in Millennial might and majesty.

3. *Heaven*—in its threefold sense:—

   (*a*) The Heaven of the Air—and so controlling Satan as "Prince of the Power of the Air."

   (*b*) The Heaven of the Stars—as Himself swaying all worlds.

   (*c*) The Heaven of the Angels—Principalities and powers being subject to Him.

4. "Far above all Heavens" that he might fill even the universal Throne of God.

Here is a descension to the lowest depths of Hades,

in order to an ascension to the highest altitudes in his new capacity as the God-man. He had been in that glory before as Son of God; but now he enters the same realm as Son of Man—a new Conquest, in a new character and capacity.

The Natural Sources of Retribution

"We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us."—*Gen. xlii. 21.*

No one text of Scripture contains such a complete survey of the inner sources of human penalty for sin. Its special province is to set this forth. Nothing is said of any external accusation. They do not yet know that it is Joseph before whom they stand. No voice from heaven upbraids them; nor, outside their own company, do there appear to have been any witnesses of their dastardly outrage against their brother's liberty and their father's peace. "They said one to another," as by a simultaneous working of the retributive law in their own breasts.

It is even more noticeable that here all the factors unite that enter into natural penalty, which makes the mission of this text the more obvious and impressive.

I.—*Memory.* "We saw the anguish of his soul"—a score of years before. Note:—

1. The Recalling Power of Memory.
2. The minuteness of Detail. "He besought us," etc.
3. The peculiar Persistence of Memory; effort to forget only deepens impression.

II.—*Conscience.* "We are verily guilty." Conscience is a compound faculty, the result of the joint working of a sense of rightness and a judgment of right and wrong.

1. The sense of obligation always follows the judgment.

2. Conscience is a whole court in itself, judges, jury, witnesses, sheriff, etc.

3. Remorse is its merciless sheriff and executioner.

III.—*Reason.* "Therefore is this distress come upon us," justifying the punishment as the logical outcome and reasonable penalty of the crime.

1. Reason is the faculty which inquires as to the reason of things.

2. Instinctively justifies a deserved punishment.

3. Will ultimately vindicate the just judgment of God.

From all this follows an inevitable conclusion, that, in the persistent attempt to evade the plain Scripture doctrine of retribution, men are resisting, not only the teaching of revelation, but also the testimony of their own inner life. Were there no Divine penalties attached to evil doing, man has in himself, as the Latins used to say, "INDEX, JUDEX, VINDEX."

Downward Progress of Sin

"When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

"This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish."—*James i.* 15, *iii.* 15.

SIN begins by a wrong desire; that ripens into a wrong act, and so brings spiritual death. There are also successive *descents:* first, the earthly level, then the sensual depths, and finally the devilish.

We may represent this by the steps of a staircase. There is the middle landing—exposure to temptation—where every man stands.

What are the steps down?

1. Trifling with temptation.

2. Yielding to it, with perhaps some misgivings and some reproaches of conscience to follow.

3. Habitual yielding to it, so that one, being habitually overcome, feels less compunction.

4. Utter slavery to habit, so that he is bound in the cords of his own sin.

5. Abandonment by himself and by God to the sin he has chosen to commit.

6. Abject surrender to the devil, as not only his victim, but his agent in tempting others.

7. Hell.

When one becomes a slave of the devil, he becomes also a demon, and goes to tempting others. That is a most alarming fact. The sinner begins by trifling with temptation, till, abandoned by God, he becomes like Satan, and undertakes to make others fall.

Spiritual Character of Christ

"The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him."—*Isaiah xi. 2, 3.*

Here is presented the sevenfold Spirit of Christ.

And the Spirit of the Lord shall Rest upon Him.

Notwithstanding human origin, at once both Seed and Sovereign of David.

Six of these seven characteristic qualities belong in pairs:—

1. Spirit of Wisdom. Originality; sagacity;

2. And Understanding. Insight into mystery, and moral discrimination.

3. Of Counsel. Authority; preceptive teaching; legislation;

4. And Might. Omnipotence; power; love.

5. Of Knowledge. Accuracy; prophetic foresight;

6. And Fear of the Lord. Morality; spirituality; ethical, judicial.

7. "Quick-Scented" (Hebrew). Spiritual Intuition. Instinct. A pervasive quality.

This unfailing Divine Instinct, which is the climax of all the rest, was peculiarly characteristic of Christ.

He detected evil immediately and beneath all disguises, etc., by a subtle affinity with God and goodness.

The Sowing and the Reaping

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."—*Galatians vi. 7.*

HERE we have plainly, and in a few words, the law of the spiritual harvest. It is vain to deceive ourselves by hoping for any other crop than that which naturally springs from the seed sown. It is worse than vain to mock God, by supposing we can deceive Him, who is Lord of the Harvest, and by whose wisdom, justice, and power the uniformity of moral law is assured.

The Law of the Harvest is two-fold.
1. A Law of Quality.
2. A Law of Quantity.

I.—THE LAW OF QUALITY: "*Whatsoever* a man soweth *that* shall he also reap. Men never gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles. Like begets like" (Matt. vii. 16-19). The fixed providential law is that certain means are inseparable from certain ends. Causes and effects are vitally linked. Certain training makes a farmer, a mechanic, a lawyer, a soldier, a scholar. Certain sins form certain habits, and those habits form and fix character and condition. God is not mocked. There is certainty and uniformity in the operation of moral law. Sowing to the flesh brings reaping unto corruption, *i. e.,* destruction; sowing to the Spirit brings reaping unto life everlasting. This law of harvest is marked by *certainty* and *uniformity;* it is inexorable and unchangeable. It may be forcibly illustrated by the three lusts—appetite, avarice, and ambition; by any form of carnality or selfishness. (Prov. v. 22). Sowing to the

flesh brings corruption in two senses; first, *outward* wickedness and, second, *inward* depravity, and decay of all spiritual life. So, of all sowing to the Spirit, in cultivating piety or usefulness among men.

II.—The Law of Quantity: Not only does like beget like, but a seed becomes a crop; the grain sown is multiplied in the harvest. Some seeds are very productive.

It is said that the creeping plume-thistle multiples so fast that, if all the seeds were productive, its seventh successive crop would suffice to plant every square foot in the solar system. To sin is to set in motion a train of causes which lead to increasingly disastrous effects. Compare the single sin of Adam in Eden. One sin produces another like itself, and many others like itself; but worse than this, it leads to sins of deeper dye and bolder daring (comp. Psalm i. 1, James iii. 15).

III.—The Reaping Time: "In due season."

Not eternity only—here as well as hereafter. In Ephes. vi. 8, and Colos. iii. 25, are opposite passages in which, taken together, there is a double hint: he that doeth wrong, or good, receives in himself the recompense—whatsoever good he bestows, or injury he inflicts, he receives back in himself—here and now; the hereafter only brings the fuller and final crop. (Eccles. xii. 14.) Even the secret things that now seem to evade judgment will not then escape.

There is, however, a deeper thought in this passage, when the context is considered. The writer is exhorting "spiritual" disciples to deal unselfishly and spiritually with the erring (verses 1, 2). They are to seek, not to condemn, but to restore (as if setting a dislocated limb) such an one and in a "spirit of *meekness.*"

Meekness in Scripture usage is a temper of spirit which is not only humble but *not self-assertive;* towards God it is never *resistful;* it accepts His dealings without resistance or remonstrance, and perhaps with rejoicing.

Towards man it is not *revengeful:* endures insult and injury without resistance, and most of all, without revenge.

Thus meekness leads to unselfishness. We bear one another's weights—loads. True, it is ordained that every man shall bear his own burdens—this is not the same word. Weights or loads (*Βαρη*) means what are too heavy for those who bear them—burden (*φορτιον*) is rather what is not disproportionate to the bearer's strength. But is not the thought suggested that by helping others to bear their infirmities we ourselves get help to bear our heavier loads? The sympathetic spirit ripens into the meek spirit which is, in God's sight, of great price, and so character becomes enriched and enlarged. Æsop says, "A man carries two bags over his shoulder; his own sins hanging behind, his neighbour's in front." Again benevolence in giving is here referred to (verse 6). One way of sowing to the Spirit is by ministering of our substance. We may use money as a seed of the spiritual harvest.

The whole passage emphasises the fact that the Law of Harvest is a *natural* law. Destruction is not an arbitrary penalty, but a natural *fruit* of our seed sowing, etc.

One Dying Instead of All

"We thus judge, that if one died instead of all, then all died. "And that He died instead of all, that they which *live* should not, henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died in their stead, and rose again."—*2 Corinth. v.* 14, 15.

If arranged according to parallels, these words show rhythmical correspondence:

1. One died in behalf of, and as a substitute for, many who were doomed to die.

2. In Him, as their vicarious substitute, all representatively died.

3. In Him, as their representative, they also rose from the dead.

4. They, therefore, owe both escape from death and the gift of Eternal Life to Him.

5. Hence their new Life belongs to Him, and should be consecrated.

This passage can be understood only in the light of the five offerings or sacrifices of Leviticus i-viii. They are divisible into (1) Descending, and (2) Ascending offerings. The sin and trespass offerings were *ill*-savoured, and regarded as being turned to ashes—the flame going downward. The other three—burnt offering, meal offering, peace offering—were sweet-savoured, the flame ascending and carrying the offering upward.

Hence Rom. xii. 1: "I beseech you therefore—by the mercies of God—that ye present your bodies." The sweet-savoured burnt offering, founded on the sin and trespass offering, is due to the mercies of God. In this chapter we have plain references to the laws of burnt offering. The washing of the inward parts—symbolic of inward *purity* or conformity—and the legs, of external holy *walk* (verses 2-10, 11-21).

Successful Running in the Race

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

"For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."—*Hebrews xii.* 1-3.

No passage of Scripture contains more useful hints on the vital secrets of success in the Christian life than this. There are seven important considerations presented:

1. Let us lay aside every weight.
2. And the easily besetting sin (unbelief).
3. And let us run the race set before us (by God).
4. With patience, perseverence, endurance. (x. 36.)

Then follow three great encouragements:

5. Looking unto Jesus—looking *away* unto Him.
6. He is the Author, Finisher, and Exemplar of faith.
7. Seeing the great cloud of witness bearers (who have run and wrestled and have overcome).

This passage bears almost indefinite study. The prevailing image is from a race, though further on the image of wrestling and pugilism is introduced, as these features were so common to Greek games, and associated with racing. Even in Palestine, after the Græco-Macedonian Empire began, national games were introduced.

The "witnesses" were not simply spectators but witness-*bearers,* who having gone triumphantly through the race, like crowned contestants, have honoured seats among spectators, and, as from heavenly heights, like a cloud above us "holy and pellucid," surround and encourage us.

It is taken as granted that *all known sin* is abandoned, which is the fundamental condition of all godly living (Romans vi.), and here are further conditions of a truly successful race. Weighty-encumbrances—whatever impedes progress, even though not in itself sinful, whatever is found to hinder spirituality, power in prayer—whatever is of doubtful propriety and ensnares the conscience—should be laid aside as a hindrance. (Comp. 1 Cor. ix. 24-27.) Harmless and even otherwise useful things will be resolutely put away by one whose only thought is to run a rapid, strong, and winning race, as the blind man cast away his garment to come to Jesus. (Mark x. 50.)

The Easily-encompassing Sin—that hangs about us like a garment, always in our way, is unbelief. It must be borne in mind that in these two chapters (xi., xii.) the one great theme is Faith and its victories—and in this

latter chapter it is constantly contrasted with unbelief and its defeats and disasters. Hence, especially to the Hebrews, whose great sin had been always limiting God by lack of faith, unbelief is referred to as the constantly besetting sin.

Practical Wisdom

"My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments," etc.—*Proverbs iii.* 1-12.

Here are master maxims for practical life. The wise man shows discrimination as to the grand faculties entrusted to man, and their uses.

For example: Memory. "My son, forget not my Law." Memory is the storehouse for the laying up of Divine precepts and promises for future use as occasion requires. When strengthened and enforced by *love* it is doubly valuable; "And let thine *heart* keep my commandments"—recollection combined with filial respect and affection. A loyal son is doubly unlikely to forget a father's expressed will or wish.

II.—Will. Next a definite purpose of obedience. "Let not mercy and truth forsake thee; bind them about thy neck; write them upon the tablet of thine heart"—a poetic expression for a *habit* of obeying. Mercy—the forgiving habit, truth—the genuine habit—are to be daily companions, worn as a necklace, engraved as an inward tablet, to be daily read and consulted.

III.—Faith. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart," etc. Trust implies dependence which is born of confidence. "Lean not unto thine own understanding." Faith surrenders all to a higher guidance. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." It fixes the eye on God, to be directed by His beck or glance. Faith is allied to humility. "Be not wise in thine own eyes."

Beautifully does this passage of Scripture close with a double lesson on SELF-SURRENDER. First, in *prosperity.* "Honour the Lord with thy substance," etc. To such a prepared soul, Prosperity is a reminder of stewardship, and if goods increase the heart is not set upon them. All gifts from heaven return to God in service, as Earth in fruit and flowers responds to sunlight and rain. Second, in *adversity.* Sorrow, suffering, defeat, and disappointment become to such a disciple only new evidences of Love, and new occasions of gratitude. Divine chastening is met neither with the stoical spirit that steels itself against the inevitable, nor the unbelieving spirit that faints in distrust of God's love, but with unshaken condence in His faithfulness.

This is but an example of the instruction which is to be found when the inner order and symmetry of the word of God is sought.

The Influence of Evil Habit

"For the ways (settled habits) of a man are before Jehovah's eyes: and he considereth all his chosen courses (of conduct).

"His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself captive, and with the cords of his own sin shall he be holden fast.

"He shall perish without amendment, and in the excess of his folly shall he reel (like a drunken man)."—*Proverbs v.* 21-23.

HERE is an example of another sort of Divine wisdom found in this amazing mine of wealth. The point of view is rather the *natural* than the supernatural side. Our slightly different rendering brings out the meaning.

Jehovah is regarded as a *spectator,* before whose gaze the habitual sinner is seen, following his own lusts, becoming confirmed in his chosen courses, and hopelessly entangled and enslaved in his own vices. *Four* conspicuous features characterise such habits of sin:

1. The wicked man is his own captor and gaoler.
2. His own sins are his own chains and fetters.

3. He is steadily moving toward a fixed moral state.

4. He is constantly sacrificing reason to the intoxication of sin.

These truths bear indefinite expansion. For example:

There is repetition of sin.

Then degeneration in sin.

Then blinded reason and conscience—insensibility.

Then weakened and paralysed will—helplessness.

Hence comes a final and fixed moral state.

The Church in the House

"The Church that is in their house."—*Romans xvi.* 5.

This expression occurs but thrice. Comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 9, Philemon 2. In two cases it applies to Priscilla and Aquila, whose abode was not only a place of assembly for disciples but a training school for Apollos.

The "house" here is not a mere place of Christian assembly. In Scripture, the *family,* rather than the individual, is the unit, and both blessing and cursing run in the channels of family life (Exod. xx. 5-6). A new and deep significance and suggestiveness is thus given to this phrase.

There are at least six or seven aspects from which the subject may be studied.

I.—Conjugal and marital. Husband and wife are to be one flesh, no longer twain. Here is implied an ideal union, which makes almost any noble result possible. Comp. Matt. xviii. 19-20, 1 Thess. iv. 1-8, 1 Peter iii. 7.

II.—Parental and filial and domestic. Here children are considered as embraced in this household unity. Emphasis is laid on parental authority and filial obedience. Even servants are included. Gen. xviii. 19, Deut. iv. 37, Josh. xxiv. 15, Ephes. vi. 1-4.

III.—Spiritual and religious. Common faith, worship,

and loyalty to God. Not only does physical likeness descend, but intellectual and moral aptitude. There is a heritage of character. 2 Timothy i. 5.

IV.—Industrial. Nothing is secular. All honest labour sacred, as a Divine calling. Exod. xxxi. 1-4, 1 Cor. vii. 20-24. Toil is thus lifted to a holy level, dignified, and sanctified.

V.—Commercial. The wider participation in financial and business matters. Man is a steward of God's property, to administer it as a trustee, needing to be wise and faithful. Ps. l. Luke xvi. 1.

VI.—Social. The influence of a family on other households—direct and indirect. The State is simply a larger family. Every well regulated household helps to model the State.

VII.—Perpetual. The family is meant to mould generations to come, to be a fountain of blessing to remotest times, and so a maker of world history.

A Church is a body of believers, united in doctrine and discipline, work, and worship, and presided over by the Spirit of God. All this has its exact correspondence in family life. Even the two great ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, have their correspondence in the household—separation unto God, and service unto God and men.

The Fool's Creed

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."—*Psalm xiv.* 1.

This verse may be read as applicable either to the intellectual or moral folly of atheism, and it is true either of the atheism of infidelity or the atheism of impiety.

I.—As to *theoretical* atheism, nothing is more unreasonable and absurd. Faith in God is sometimes charged with being credulous, but there is no credulity like that

of incredulity. Even Napoleon remarked to some sceptical officers that they seemed to make amends for not believing in Christianity by believing everything else, however foolish. Had not sin obscured and biassed the mental vision, all infidelity would have been impossible. The intellectual absurdity of atheism will appear from the following points of view:—

1. It leaves creation without a Creator.
2. Design without a Designer.
3. The Universe without a Controller.
4. Human history without a Ruler.
5. Morality without any basis of authority.
6. Iniquity without any adequate restraint.
7. Death without any hope or hereafter.

II.—But the *moral* atheism of impiety is probably what the Holy Spirit is here rebuking. "The (impious) fool hath, in his heart, said: No God!" And it may be understood not as an affirmation but as an exclamation, as though he had said, within, "Would there were no God," or "Let there be no God." The inward tendency and drift of all impiety is to get rid of God. With him who is determined to sin it is an object to banish God from the moral universe. This, the real purport of this text, appears again in the fifty-third Psalm in the same identical language, as if to emphasise its lesson.

Here again we may see the natural course of a sinner in seeking to get rid of God.

1. Sin is, at its root, lawlessness, defiance of authority.
2. Lawlessness despises and defies all control.
3. It is therefore an assault on the rule of God.
4. Sin fears nothing so much as moral accountability.
5. Accountability rests on a moral government.
6. To get rid of God is to sin with impunity.
7. Hence the impious man would destroy God if he could.

This and its companion psalm (liii.) both connect atheism with moral corruption. Mark the successive charges:

1. They are corrupt.
2. They have done abominable works.
3. There is none that doeth good. (Repeated verse 3.)
4. Among the children of men, God sees none that understand and seek God.
5. They are all gone aside.
6. They are all together become filthy.
7. The workers of iniquity have no knowledge of God, and feed, as do vultures on carrion, on the faults and sins of God's people.

It is because the nature of man is corrupt, his works abominable, his understanding alienated from God, his whole life filthy, that he delights in the inconsistencies and apostasies of disciples and seeks to bring himself to believe that there is no God.

The Nature, Object and Office of Prophecy

"Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

"Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

"Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."—1 *Peter i.* 10-12.

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."—2 *Peter i.* 20, 21.

THESE two passages together constitute an invaluable guide to the understanding of Predictive Prophecy. The former makes clear that the prophet himself did not al-

ways understand his own predictions; the latter gives us a Scriptural view of inspiration.

We are here taught

1. The *Source* of Prophecy. "The Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify." "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

2. The *Burden* of Prophecy. "They testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

3. The *Object* of Prophecy. "Unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you." "A light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn," etc.

4. The *Duty of the reader.* "Whereunto ye do well that ye *take heed.*" And what is it to take heed? To accept the sufferings of Christ as our only hope and so inherit in Him the glory that is to follow. Comp. 1 Peter i. 18-21.

What a grand basis for gospel appeal! Here is an argument for Christianity which appeals to the natural man; it fully accredits the Scriptures as divine and authoritative, so that the reader may be led to believe. Then they instruct him how and what to believe. Christ's sufferings were vicarious, and he is to accept His work of redeeming love, and thus become an heir of the glory which He purchased for His own through sufferings. And thus "faith and hope" find in God their full trust and rest. The believer has a natural faith and a reasonable hope, for which he can give an answer, both to himself and to all men.

Warnings to the Disobedient

"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner.

"And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."—1 *Peter ii.* 7, 8.

"By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

"Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."—1 *Peter iii.* 19, 20.

HERE occur two warnings to disobedient souls, and it is significant that only in these cases does the word "disobedient" occur. In the revised version the words "such as disbelieve" are substituted for disobedient in the first case of its occurrence, that reading being preferred. But this only throws light on the connection between unbelief and disobedience. Unto the unbelieving, even to them which be disobedient, Christ is a stone of stumbling, etc. (comp., Hebrews iii. 7—iv. 11), where unbelief and disobedience are similarly linked.

In the second instance (iii. 19, 20) Christ is represented as preaching to the spirits in prison, which some time were disobedient—probably meaning that *by the Holy Spirit, in the person of Noah,* Christ preached to the Antediluvians. The words *in prison* may refer to their condition *then* (Isa. lxi. 1) or *now;* but in either case disobedience is connected with bondage—it puts and keeps souls in prison.

The two passages together teach a double and impressive lesson. Christ is presented under two aspects. God is building a Spiritual House of which He is both corner stone and cap-stone—the figure seems to be that of a pyramid. God is also preparing a flood of judgment, and

an ark is provided. The believing and obedient accept Christ as God's precious corner stone, and build upon Him, and are built upon Him as living stones, themselves part of God's spiritual house, this being an example of the fact that names applied to Christ in the singular are often applied to believers in the plural (such as Sons of God, Lights, Lambs, Priests, Kings, etc). The unbelieving and disobedient stumble over Christ to their damage, and He falls on them finally to their destruction. (Matthew xxi. 44.)

The second passage suggests a flood of wrath and an Ark of Refuge. Believing souls enter the Ark and are saved. Unbelievers continue disobedient, perhaps mock at danger, and perish.

By faith we escape the final Judgment of Wrath and become incorporated with the great Eternal Temple of God. If we understand "in prison" to refer to the present condition of these Antediluvian sinners, the text is still more suggestive, for the immediate result of disobedience was that they perished in the flood, and the remote result was that they are held in prison unto the judgment of the great day. How unspeakably blessed is that faith which begets obedience, which enables us to enter God's Ark and be safe, which makes God's elect Corner stone "the preciousness," and the eternal and immovable foundation of character and conduct, history and destiny!

Avoidance of Temptation

"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."—*Matthew xxvi.* 41.

ENTER not—εισελθητε—suggests a territory of temptation to be specially avoided, where the force of allurements to sin is particularly felt, and where the flesh is peculiarly

weak. The petition, "lead us not into temptation," suggests a similar thought, as also the language about our Lord's being led up or driven into the wilderness to be tempted, as though even He would not venture unbidden upon such dangerous ground.

There certainly is such territory, and it is found wherever the world, the flesh, or the Devil are specially prominent and dominant. Hence the emphatic warnings against these three foes.

The world emphasises the visible and temporal, shutting out the unseen and eternal. The peril here lies in forgetting eternity, etc. The flesh feeds appetite and sensual indulgence; there is a fire in the blood which may be fanned into a flame that consumes the whole being. Imagination and memory feed it with fuel, and the conscience and will are burned up in its fires.

In the higher realm of the mind Satan suggests evil thoughts, desires, and plans, attacks our very beliefs, and assaults God. He will do all he can to make us Atheists or invest God with all repulsive attributes. These are his fiery darts.

He who *watches* constantly *looks out* for danger, and avoids the way that leads to it.

He who *prays looks up* for higher help and strength. A watchful soul sees in the world what is not of the Father and tends to engross the mind in present and visible good. The watchful man sees in the flesh a power that, once becoming master, seldom releases the slave.

The watchful man sees in the Devil the subtlest of all foes, who works directly on the mind and heart to impel us to deny God's existence or at least doubt His goodness and love.

This territory is one where Judgment is liable to fall at any moment.

The Crowning Evidence

"Until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." —*2 Peter i.* 19.

This appears to be the third and crowning stage of evidence that "we have not followed cunningly-devised fables." First, the proof from prophecy, holy men of God testifying beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Then, second, the transfiguration as the emphatic revelation of the proper present glory of Christ; and now, last, the revelation of Christ "in our hearts," like a dawn after night, the morning star, which, last of the night and first of the morning, marks the transition from darkness to light.

To know Christ in personal experience is greater than to know Him as the focal centre of all Messianic prophecy and the glorious personage, Himself the central miracle of Gospel history. The believer, in whom He thus rises as the morning star, and breaks like a new dawn of day, finds in himself, experimentally, prophecy fulfilled and transfiguration accomplished. The essentials of fulfilled prophecy are a Divine promise and corresponding event. All promises of God are prophecies, addressed to the individual and conditional upon faith and obedience. Every time that a child of God thus puts God to the test and finds Him faithful a new fulfilment has come to prophecy in his experience.

Hence the word *until.* Not that prophecy is of no more value in His eyes after the inward revelation of Christ, but that it is no longer a light shining in a dark place, for the darkness is now gone and the true light is come. There can be no longer doubt of the reality of Christ when He is thus introduced into the inmost life. Light needs no proof, it is its own demonstration. The man who appropriates God's promises and really trusts Himself to them and risks everything upon God's fidelity

will find God to be true to His word and oath, and daily life will become one continual testimony to God's trust and good faith, and he will know in himself a moral transfiguration.

Satan as a Hinderer

"Satan hindered us."—1 *Thess.* ii. 18.

THE word, ενεκοψεν, means to *cut in the way of an enemy,* as in digging a trench. Paul wished and willed to come, once and again, to Thessalonica, but Satan hindered by some of his subtle methods. Observe clear indication here of Satan's *personality:* He is an obstructionist toward all that is good. He bears a threefold character—tempter, accuser, hinderer, not only obstructive, but destructive in his spirit.

Comp. Nehemiah iv. vi. Luke xi. 52. 1 Cor. ix. 12.

Several ways in which Satan hinders:—

1. DIVERSION. (2 Cor. iv. 4. 1 Jno. ii. 15, 16.)
2. DELUSION. 2 Thess. ii. 11, Matt. vii. 15.)
3. DOUBTFUL MIND. (Rom. xiv. 23.)
4. DOUBLE MIND. (Jas. i. 8. Matt. vi. 24.)
5. DARKNESS. (Isaiah l. 10.)
6. DEADNESS. Jas. ii. 26. Heb. vi. 1., ix. 14.)
7. DELAY. (Luke ix. 59-62. Acts xxiv. 25.)

References to Stoning

"Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."—*Matt. xxi.* 44.

PROBABLY these words refer to the two steps or stages in the execution of capital penalty by stoning. Criminals, condemned to this death, had their hands bound and were led outside the gates to some small eminence, where a large stone was laid at the bottom. When within ten

cubits, they were exhorted to confess, like Achan, that they might not die with their sins upon them, unforgiven. Then, advancing within four cubits, stripped nearly naked, they received some stupefying draught; the "witnesses" who were to execute the sentence meanwhile laying down their outer robes (comp. Acts vii., Stephen's stoning). The criminal was then set on the edge of the precipice and pushed backwards so as to "fall on" the stone below and be "broken"; if not killed by the fall, the second witness flung down a large stone so as to have it fall upon the victim's breast; and then the bystanders, "the people of the land," rushed forward and completed the awful tragedy. It will be seen also how much like stoning were many things about crucifixion. Whether after stoning or crucifying, the body, as in Achan's case, was burned with fire.

Unrest Within

"Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."—*Esther v.* 13.

1. No outward good can meet an inward need.
2. An inward evil can mar any outward good.
3. The highest blessing is a sanctified temper.

Holy Converse

"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name."—*Malachi iii.* 16.

1. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.
2. All sanctified speech is born of holy thoughts; they thought upon His name.
3. Reverential and filial fear of God specially prompts hallowed converse.

4. Such talk attracts the ear and heart of God. The Lord hearkened.

5. It brings us into closer and more intimate fellowship with Him.

6. It has a special promise of reward. "They shall be mine," etc.

7. It tends to emphasise moral distinctions. (Verse 18.)

Christ's Kingdom Not of This World

"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."—*John xviii.* 36.

1. In its origin and character.
2. In its principles and precepts.
3. In its aims and objects.
4. In its subjects and citizens.
5. In its weapons and methods.
6. In its conquests and outcome.

Typical Experiences of Believers

I.—CRUCIFIXION.

Great Central Passages

Matt. x. 38; xvi. 24. Luke ix. 23; xiv. 27. Mark viii. 34; x. 21. Romans vi. 6.

Two aspects:

1. One is *Judicial.* Rom. vi. 6. "Old man" the man of old—the former unregenerate self, judicially put to

death, representatively in Christ. Comp. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. "We thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died," etc.

2. *Actual,* personal, voluntary. Hence coupled with "DENY THYSELF." Compare John xii. 23-27. This latter not a condition of *salvation,* like the former, but of *sanctification and service.* The language is very noteworthy. "Is not *worthy* of me," "cannot be my *disciple," i.e.,* follower; "Finding and losing *life,*" "If any man serve, follow," him will my Father "HONOUR."

Comp. 1 Cor. iii. 11-15. Clear distinction between being saved, and the life work being able to stand ordeal. Difference between RECEPTION and REALISATION, BIRTH and GROWTH, SAVING FAITH and ABOUNDING FRUIT. "FOLLOWING" seems never confused with simple "BELIEVING."

Comp. 1 Peter ii. 21-23. Leaving us an example that we should follow, etc. Here the following consists in Doing no Sin, Speaking no Guile, Feeling no Revenge, etc.

THE GREAT EPISTLE OF CRUCIFIXION: Galatians.

The word, CROSS, three times, v. 11; vi. 12, 14; CRUCIFIED, four times, ii. 20; iii. 1; v. 24; vi. 14.

Here the Judicial and Actual side of crucifixion brought out as nowhere else.

Judicial, iii. 1; Actual, ii. 20; v. 24; vi. 14; BOTH, ii. 20. I HAVE BEEN CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST: Judicially, when He died; actually, when I take up my cross, daily, and follow.

FOUR ASPECTS OF ACTUAL CRUCIFIXION OR VOLUNTARY DEATH:

1. LAW. Gal. ii. 19. "I through the law—dead to law," etc.

   Rom. vi., vii. Dead Law as to "master" or "husband" exercising a tyrannical power to enslave and control.

   (a) As accuser. Rom. viii. 33. The law personified as an adversary in court.

(b) As advocate. Rom. iii. 20; vii. 18-20. Legal justification impossible. Law cannot vindicate me.

2. SELF. "I" Ego. Gal. ii. 20; 2 Cor. v. 5. "I am crucified. I live, yet not I." Comp. Pharisee's prayer. Luke xviii. 11, 12. He prayed "with Himself," followed by five "I's."

Here in Paul's words, seven times "I"—three times *Me,* but how different in spirit! the arrogant "*I*" inflected into the prostrate "*Me.*"

Self-life has seven principal forms: (1) self-righteousness; (2) self-help; (3) self-seeking; (4) self-pleasing; (5) self-will; (6) self-defence; (7) self-glory.

3. FLESH. Gal. v. 16, 19-24—is the only case of active voice. "*Have* crucified." Comp. Rom. viii. 12. MORTIFY. Eph. iv. 22.

(1) All sinful and even doubtful pleasures renounced at cost of pain. Rom. xiv. 21-23.

(2) All pleasure seeking *as such,* which elevates self-gratification unduly; "not please ourselves." Rom. xv. 1-2.

4. WORLD. Double crucifixion. vi. 14.

(1) World scorned by us. 1 John ii. 15-17; James iv. 4.

(2) We hated and scorned by world. John xvii. 14; 1 John iii. 2, 13; "made spectacle to world." 1 Cor. iv. 9.

II.—RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION.

Generally linked in the New Testament as parts of one great MIRACLE. Christ descending from the highest heavenly level to the lowest human level; then back from the grave of a malefactor to the throne of universe. Comp. Philip. ii. 5-11.

Central passages: Rom. vi. 1-11; Col. ii. 9-13; iii. 1. Most important: Ephes. i. 19-23.

Christ's Resurrection and Ascension typical of believers' new life and height of privilege in Him.

Some specially notable features:

1. The NEW LIFE DATES not from His CROSS, but tomb. In Him the believer died, "buried with Him by baptism unto death," risen with Him that "like as, even so," etc. Rom. vi. 4; Colos. ii. 12, 13.

2. The Resurrection is the Signal for the Reception of the Holy Spirit as Spirit of life. Rom. viii. 2.

Hence the first outbreathing of the Spirit immediately followed the Resurrection. John xx. 22. This seems to be the impartation of the Spirit of *Life*. Pentecost emphasises the Spirit of *Power* for work and witness. Acts i. 8.

3. The resurrection is the putting off of the OLD MAN, and the putting on of the NEW MAN. Eph. iv. 22, 24; Colos. iii. 8-14.

4. This also implies a change of garments—a new attire.

(*a*) We are supposed to have sloughed off the sinful habits of our past life, as Christ left His grave clothes in the tomb. The Greek words imply that He was tightly "wound up" and "bound about" with these linen wrappings, with a hundred pounds of spices scattered in the folds, and that, when He rose, He left these wrappings undisturbed in their original convolutions. Compare John xi. 43, 44; xix. 39, 40; xx. 6, 8.

(*b*) We are supposed, also, to put on supernatural attire. After Christ rose, His robes seem to have been miraculously provided.

5. The Resurrection implies and includes Ascension.

To rise from the dead is entire reversal of natural law. To ascend from earth is again to contravene gravitation. The believer by a new principle of life, leaves the place of death, and rises by Divine power to a heavenly level. Henceforth his experience is in the heavenlies. (Ephes. i. 3.)

There are three natural laws all contravened in grace:

1. Out of death no life.
2. Degeneration knows no regeneration.
3. Gravitation reigns universally.

On the other hand, in Christ:

1. Death is the way to life.
2. Regeneration displaces degeneration.
3. Levitation overcomes gravitation.

III. THE NEW WALK.

Typified by Our Lord's "forty days"—a typically complete period of earthly experience, 4 x 10. Comp. Enoch, 365 years of life—a complete cycle.

THIS IDEA OF WALK WITH GOD pervades Scripture.

Enoch, Gen. v. 22, 24; Noah, vi. 9; Josh. v. 6; Col. ii. 6; Amos. iii. 3. "Can two walk together?" &c.

The conception is very simple; it involves:—

(1) The same starting-point. Conversion.

(2) The same direction, progress step by step. Sanctification. Service.

(3) The same goal or terminus. Glory. Reward.

This idea of HOLY WALK is also represented under figure of PILGRIMAGE (1 Peter ii. 11; Heb. xi. 13, 16).

Also a RACE (1 Cor. ix. 24-27; Philip iii. 12-14; Heb. xii. 1, 2).

In all alike the same central thought, a starting, step by step progress, and a finish.

The WALK WITH GOD emphasises holy fellowship or agreement.

The PILGRIMAGE, companionship with believers, and sojourn in an enemy's country.

The RACE, the need of patience and perseverance, and the crown of victory.

1. WALK. Comp. Gal. v. 16, in the Spirit. Eph. v. 2, in love; 15, circumspectly; Col. iv. 5, in wisdom. Col. i. 10, worthy of the Lord; ii. 6, in Him.

2. PILGRIMAGE. With girded loins. As redeemed people. As strangers, etc. In His steps (1 Pet. i. 13, 18; ii. 11, 21).

3. RACE. Central idea: "Let us run with patience." "I press toward the mark, the prize." Perseverance. "Lay hold," then "hold fast."

In the three passages cited already (*see* "Race") seven rules for a successful race are suggested:—

1. "Lay aside weights." These are not sins, but *hindrances.*

Comp. Rich ruler, Luke xviii. 22-24; Moses, Heb. xi. 24-27. Paul's three rules as to "things lawful." 1 Cor.. vi. 12; x. 23.

2. Besetting sin—*unbelief*—ever present encumbrance; root of disobedience. Heb. iii. 7.—iv. 11. It limits God. Psa. lxxviii. 41. And makes God a liar. 1 John iv. 10; Heb. vi. 16-20; John iii. 33.

3. Keep the body under. 1 Cor. ix. 24-27; Gal. vi. 16-25. Spirit, soul, body. 1 Thess. v. 23; Rom. xii. 1, 2.

4. Forgetting what is behind, etc. Phil. iii. 13, 14. Progress by oblivion of the past. Spinoza's maxim: "Self-conceit begets laziness and arrests progress." Three pillars in the stadium: The middle pillar bore the motto—"Make haste."

5. This ONE THING I DO—literally "but one." Need of single aim. Matt. vi. 33. Put first things first. No greater index of a man than his ruling purpose.

6. We are compassed about with a cloud of witness-bearers (Heb. xii. 1), those who have run the race and won the crown. 1 Cor. x. 13. Believers have a common experience of temptation, and what enables one, may help all, to win.

7. Looking away unto Jesus. From even the best example to the great EXEMPLAR of faith. In Him both start and finish. His supreme aim was pleasing God. He ran with patience. He is crowned victor. "Consider Him."

IV.—CONFLICT.

Special crises of Christ's life: Temptation. (Matt. iv.) Gethsemane. (Heb. v. 7, 8.) Ascension. (Eph. iv. 8; Col. ii., 14, 15.)

Noticeable fact: In Christian life the severest conflict when there is highest attainment. Hence in Ephes. vi. 10-18, at end of the Epistle of the Heavenlies, most emphatic warning. Flesh and blood wrestlings belong to lower plane; Satanic assaults to the higher.

Yet observe. A panoply for every part, and ability to *stand,* even before the devil. Very noticeable: Six pieces of ARMOUR and six characters of Satan; each the exact counterpart of the other.

1. GIRDLE of truth *vs.* Satan as a LIAR. (John viii. 44; Rev. xii. 9.)
2. BREASTPLATE of righteousness *vs.* Satan as ACCUSER. (Rev. xii. 10, 11.)
3. SANDALS of alacrity *vs.* Satan as a HINDERER. (1 Thess. ii. 18.)
4. SHIELD OF FAITH *vs.* Satan as a DESTROYER. (Ps. xvii. 4; Rev. ix. 11.)
5. HELMET OF SALVATION *vs.* Satan as a BLASPHEMER. (Rev. xiii. 5, 6.)
6. SWORD OF SPIRIT *vs.* Satan as a TEMPTER. Comp. Matt. iv. 4, 10.

Similar assurances as to other foes:

Flesh. (Gal. v. 16.) Not promised that we shall not *have,* but shall "not *fulfil,* the lusts of the flesh."

World. (John xvi. 33; 1 John v. 4.)

Death. (1 Cor. xv. 54-58.)

V.—COMPENSATION AND REST.

Typified in Christ's session at right hand of God. Phrase "*sat down*" refers to finished work, etc.

Comp. Heb. i. 3; Eph. i. 20-21; Rom. viii. 34;

Believer in Christ supposed to share His session (Col. iii. 12) even now, not only by anticipation, but participation. Various ways of representing:

1. Rest. Threefold. (Matt. xi. 28, 30.)—from sin in salvation, from inward restless tempers in learning sanctification, from hurry and worry of work by fellowship in service. Comp. Heb. iii. 7—iv. 11. Canaan type of present rest by appropriation of promise.

2. INDWELLING of God. (John xiv. 23.)

3. INDWELLING of believer in Christ. (Rom. v. 10; viii. 31-39.) Kept safe, etc. "IN CHRIST," key to every epistle.

4. IDENTIFICATION with Christ in History and Destiny. (1 John iv. 17.)

5. Hence highest rest, PERFECT LOVE. (1 John iv. 7-19.)

Assimilation of the Worshipper to His God

"They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them."—*Psalm cxv.* 8.

THIS Psalm and the 135th are almost identical. Both represent the idols that men worship as entirely senseless, dumb, deaf, sightless, impotent and helpless. So is every one that makes or trusts in or worships them. The whole effect of idolatry is to reduce the worshipper to the idol's level, to make him as dumb, stupid, senseless, as the object of his worship. The historic fact is that every generation of idolators sinks to a lower level. The deterioration goes on rapidly toward the condition of the brute, and the unreasoning, unthinking, irrational idol—toward a blank materialism. The general truth is thus suggested that all worship tends to assimilate the worshipper to the god he worships.

1. His god suggests the thoughts, the conceptions, that rule in his intellectual life.

2. His god becomes the ideal that rules in his practical life.

3. His god determines the associations that govern his social and family life.

An instructive chapter on this theme may be found in Walker's "Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation."

A Useful Man

"David served his own generation by the will of God."—*Acts xiii.* 36.

FINE conception of a holy and useful life.

I.—Service. Grandeur of word—not lordship, but service. The greatness of doing good—of helping others, of condescending to be a servant. Contrast those who love to have pre-eminence while they sing, "O to be nothing!"

II.—"His own generation." Dr. Herron said, "We need men of the times for the times. Necessity of insight into the wants of our own day—of observing eyes as to the signs of the times. There is a "*present* truth," demanded by forms of error in doctrine or practice, just now particularly needed.

III.—"By the will of God." The true life is a part of God's eternal life. All our work is a part of God's. His work spans the ages and fills the universe. Over against each true servant of God stands a portion of God's work, bearing His name and the date of this year. The highest success depends on finding out God's plan in our generation and falling into our place in it.

The Secret of Being Kept

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, keep yourselves in the love of God."—*Jude* 20, 21.

Thus arranged, the participles represent the *means* by which the injunction is followed. Comp. 1 Peter i. 13, which is exactly similar in construction and closely akin in sentiment.

Jude is the prophet of the Apostasy. He sounds the final note of warning. The key word is "kept." Those who embrace the faith and contend for the faith are *preserved* unto the day of presentation; those who reject and oppose the faith are *reserved* unto the day of retribution. Those who kept not their first estate, and are kept for judgment, are contrasted with those who keep themselves in the love of God, and are kept by His power.

There are two sides to this *keeping:* a *divine* side (v. 24) and a *human* side (vv. 20, 21). The words *preserve* and *persevere* are so much alike that one can be spelt from the other; and so if we are to be preserved it is equally true that we must persevere. *How to persevere* is the subject of this text.

The text itself supplies the divisions: 1. The great duty and privilege: Keep yourselves in the love of God. 2. The way to do it: Building, praying, looking.

We begin with the three *means* of perseverance:

1. A perseverance of *Growth.* Building up yourselves on your most holy faith means carrying up character and conduct towards perfection. The foundation is laid. which is Jesus Christ. We have simply to add stone to stone and story to story, and use material consistent with the foundation (1 Cor. iii. 10-15). "Faith" seems to stand here, as it often does, for the *Truth held in faith;*

what is believed and the belief of it both being included. And the disciple is to go on adding to faith, virtue, etc., until the whole life is complete. (See 2 Peter i. 5-7.) Two conditions are essential to this growth: (*a*) Growing knowledge of the Word of God, which supplies the material for faith; (*b*) growing obedience of the Word, which incorporates the truth in the life. The Word is the quarry from which obedience takes the blocks that are built into conduct. To study the Scriptures daily and practise what we learn insures this building up, and nothing else will; it also insures that right material shall be used.

2. A perseverance of *Prayer.* As the Word of God supplies the truth to be embraced by faith, so prayer supplies the energy and force to appropriate truth and incorporate it into our life. If the Word of God is the quarry, Prayer is the power which turns the stone into building material and puts it in its place. The phrase is peculiar, "praying *in the Holy Ghost.*" Elsewhere the Holy Ghost is represented as praying *in us* (Rom. viii. 26, 27). Both representations are true. Here the Spirit of God is represented as the atmosphere or element necessary to prayer. We can only persevere in prayer as we abide in the Spirit. A worldly atmosphere stifles prayer. We must breathe *in* the Spirit and then prayer is the breathing *out* of the Spirit unto God. Here again is a twofold condition of praying; first there must be daily fellowship with the Spirit, or we shall not have the spirit of prayer; and again there must be daily exercise of prayer itself as communion with God. Such prayer becomes both a protection from temptation and a means of assimilation to God.

3. A perseverance of *Hope.* (Comp. 1 Peter i. 1-13.) Hope looks forward into the future. The final consummation of the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ waits to be revealed. We are pilgrims toward a better country, and are passing through an enemy's territory. Here

we are to have only our *tent;* our permanent *home* is beyond. Hence the importance of fastening our gaze upon the city which hath foundations. All apostasy comes from looking at the past or at the present. To dwell on past attainments makes progress impossible. To be absorbed in the present is to follow the spirit of the age, always contrary to God. If faith provides the *quarry* and prayer the *energy* for building up Christian life, hope presents the *ideal* of the structure, and teaches us how to build. It becomes to us a perpetual, inspiring, heavenly vision, and the building grows into conformity with it.

We are now prepared to appreciate the injunction: *Keep yourselves in the Love of God.* This suggests, first, that our only hope is in *positive culture* of holiness. Negative resistance to evil is not enough: we must overcome evil with good. We must learn the "expulsive power of a new affection" which drives out evil, and displaces it by good. Ulysses sought to escape the sirens by being bound to the mast of his vessel. Orpheus drowned their voices with his lyre and sacred songs. Secondly, it is in the *love of God*; not our love to Him but His love to us that we must find keeping power. Archbishop Usher, when an old man, lacked animal heat, and he used to seek to be constantly bathed in sunshine. When too feeble to go out of doors he would be wheeled in his chair to an eastern window in the morning, a southerly window at noon and a western window toward evening, and *abide in the sunshine.*

Nature and Mission of the Word of God

"As the rain cometh down . . . so shall my Word be that goeth forth out of my mouth."—*Isa. lv.* 10, 11.

Here is God's Word as He estimates it and illustrates its nature, mission, and effect.

As the rain cometh down and the snow from Heaven, etc.

1. *A Divine Origin.* The rain and the snow, however they may be connected with earth by evaporation, are essentially a heavenly product. The vapours that ascend leave behind them their uncleanness, and, in the upper realms where rain distils and snowflakes are crystallised, no impurities are found. The Word of God "comes down" from Heaven: it "goeth forth out of My Mouth." The heavens are beautifully conceived of as a mouth opening to pour forth benedictions. And so God's Word, whatever its connection with earth and earthly agents, is essentially His Word, coming down from above.

2. *A Gracious Mission.* The rain and snow come down to water the earth, to make it bring forth and bud, give seed to the sower and bread to the eater.

Note here five results: 1. to provide moisture; 2. to make fertile; 3, to make beautiful; 4, to furnish seed; and 5, to provide bread. In other words, rain and snow-water fertilise and beautify the soil and provide food and seed for the family of man. Compare the five uses of the Word of God. It supplies the blessing of Heaven to earth, waters which change deserts into gardens, as the "Valley of Desolation," in South Africa, reclaimed by irrigation, became Graaf Reinet, with its gardens of roses, in which eighty varieties bloom. It makes character both beautiful and fruitful; it supplies food for man's soul and seed for the harvest of his service.

3. *A Silent Ministry.* Rain and Snow come down gently, noiselessly. What is more noiseless than the summer shower or the winter snowflake in its descent! The poet Pierpont used it as a simile to represent the power of a freeman's ballot:

> "A weapon that comes down as still,
> As snow-flakes fall upon the sod."

The Word of God comes without observation. It falls into a human mind and heart silently, and in secrecy performs its mission and ministry, changing convictions, giving new character to affections and new resolves to the will.

4. *A Certain Result.* It shall not return to Me void, etc. The rain returneth not thither until it has watered the earth. Not a jot or tittle of the law fails—not a detail of prophecy, not a minute promise. All shall be fulfilled. All shall accomplish the errand, the pleasure of God. (1) Regeneration, James i. 18; 1 Peter iii. 23. (2) Faith, Rom. x. 17; John v. 24. (3) Justification, Rom. iv. 3, 4. (4) Sanctification, John xvii. 17.

5. *An Ultimate Report.* Rain and snow return by evaporation. There is a law of circularity in nature. The Word of God returns to Him and makes its report—of reception or rejection, but in any case, to His glory—if received, in the saving and sanctifying of men; if rejected in the justice of their condemnation.

The Threefold Glory of Zion

"Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof.

"Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.

"For this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death."—*Psalm xlviii.* 12-14.

Four Psalms beside this—viz., 46th, 65th, 75th, and 76th, celebrate the destruction of Sennacherib and repulse of Assyrian invasion (comp. 2 Kings xix). These Assyrians had counted the towers of Jerusalem in mockery. Comp. Isa. xxxiii. 18.

The Psalmist here regards Zion as the dwelling-place

of God, and both strong and beautiful because He is there. The last verse, in which the covenant relation with Jehovah is the occasion of exultation, leaves no doubt of the spiritual application of the text. Zion is here the symbol of the CHURCH OF GOD; and the Towers, Bulwarks, and Palaces may represent the threefold charm and glory of the Church.

I.—HER TOWERS. These naturally represent the great TRUTHS that are lifted into prominence. Comp. 2 Cor. x. 5, where conspicuous errors are the high towers of evil. There are some ten great truths curiously related and parts of one system. Five of them are like corner towers—the Being of God is central to all—then the doctrine of the Son, the Spirit, Man, and the Word of God. The intermediate connecting truths are the Mediation of Christ in Atonement, the Mediation of the Spirit in Regeneration, Justification by Faith, the Inspiration of the sacred writers, and the right of private study of Scripture. No one of these truths can be sacrificed without weakening the whole structure.

II.—HER BULWARKS. These as naturally represent the great BARRIERS or DEFENCES of the Church, which act as restraints against wickedness and worldliness, serving both to keep in disciples and keep out evildoers. The Church has certain *separating* barriers which define her province and life, and restraining barriers which repel and restrain evil. No small part of the service of the Church in the world is found in this *resistance* to evil. "*Trituntur mallei, remanet incus*" is the motto of the Vaudois Church. What the dykes are to Holland the Church is to the community: it keeps out the flood of evil.

III.—HER PALACES. These suggest beauty, honour, delight, privilege, and may stand for all the privileges of the children of God. These may be mainly grouped under—1. Worship, with all the ordinances, sacraments, prayer, praise, etc. 2. Fellowship, both with God and

Saints. 3. Holy living and growing both in knowledge and grace. 4. Service to God and man.

This last thought finds further expansion in verse 14, where the transcendent privilege of claiming covenant relations with the King himself, as God and guide, supplies the closing refrain.

False Views of Life

"We spend our years as a tale that is told."—*Psalm xc.* 9.

THE last three words are in italics, being supplied by translators. It is doubtful whether they add anything to the inspired thought. A tale is something that narrates in a few moments a story of events which may reach over many years. And this seems to be the conception of Moses. Human life is so brief in duration, and especially in retrospect, that it seems rather like a quickly recited tale than like the history of which it is the story—a *story,* not a *history.*

2. From this comes another and related thought. A tale is often fictitious; it deals in fancy rather than fact; and often what is founded on fact is mixed with fiction. Sometimes a story of a life reads like an unreal romance; and so we have a second suggestion. Life seems not only brief, but unreal. Its verities do not impress us; its responsibilities we do not weigh as we ought.

3. From this comes a third thought. Human life seems unimportant. We do not feel its awful value—its relations to the hereafter as the vestibule and the preparation for eternity. We live it as we hear a tale, with comparative indifference, and lo! it is gone, and we are gone with it.

A fine turn might now be made in conclusion, showing the *true length of life;* it is long only when it answers the great end of life; it is real only as it works out

eternal verities; it is valuable only as it serves God and man and fits us to enjoy God for ever.

To put this theme in brief: 1. Life seems *brief*—more like a story than a history. 2. *Unreal*—more like a romance than a reality. 3. *Unimportant*—more like a trifle than a treasure.

Thanksgiving

"In every thing give thanks."—1 *Thess. v.* 18.

Nothing can be broader or more comprehensive than the expression *in everything.* It includes all things that enter into the experiences of a believer.

1. All *external blessings,* whether temporal or spiritual, from the smallest of our daily comforts to the greatest of our redemptive mercies. Every good gift is from above, and, therefore, demands grateful recognition and acknowledgment.

2. All *Divine discipline,* however antagonistic it may be to our plans and feelings. It is God's loving chastening and correction. "Disappointments" may be viewed as "His appointments." Comp. Heb. xii. 1-10; John xv. 1-10.

3. All *future good,* yet unrealised, but appropriated by faith, and so enjoyed in advance and foretaste. Faith brings down to earth the days of heaven, and projects our lives into the future.

4. All *holy and grateful dispositions,* which enable us to recognise and realise our Father's hand and care.

> "Nor is the least a thankful heart,
> That tastes those gifts with joy."

As John Newton says, "Thanks-giving means thanks-living."

Hindrances in the Disposition

Luke ix. 57-62.

We have Christ's instructive dealing with three proposed followers: 1. The *ambitious self-seeker,* who obviously had some personal, perhaps temporal advantage in view, to whom Christ answered, "Foxes have holes," etc. If the Master had no temporal good for Himself to enjoy, He had none to confer on followers.

2. The *procrastinating time-server,* who sought an excuse for postponing an immediate duty, to whom Christ replies that not even for offices of filial love should the duty of following Him be delayed.

3. The *hesitating and half-hearted compromiser,* who was not ready to surrender all things, to whom the Master taught the needful lesson that His service admits no divided allegiance or affection. *Looking* back means *going* back.

In this same chapter, Luke ix. 33, 40, 45, we have three incapacities—speech without knowledge, action without power, and hearing without understanding. Also three wrong dispositions rebuked—verses 46-56—ambition to be greatest; intolerance in forbidding even exorcism, because the exorcists followed not with them; and vindictiveness, proposing to call down fire to consume men because they received not the Master.

Symbols of the Word

The following *symbols of the power and value of the Word of God* are used within its pages. We may class them under *seven* divisions:

1. The *mirror,* to show us ourselves, both as we are and we may and ought to be (James i. 25).

2. The *laver* to wash away our sin and filth (Eph. v. 26). It is noticeable that the *laver* may have suggested the *mirror,* because the water first mirrors the face which it cleanses.

3. The *lamp* or *light* to reveal the way and to guide us in it (Ps. cxix. 105).

4. The *milk, bread, strong meat, honey*—a variety of food, furnishing sustenance and satisfaction to believing souls at every stage of spiritual history and development, from the new-born babe to the full-grown man (Heb. v. 12-14; Ps. xix. 10, etc.)

5. The fine *gold* to enrich and adorn us with heavenly treasure and beauty (Ps. xix. 10).

6. The *fire, hammer, sword,* weapons and implements for the work and warfare of the Christian life (Jer. xxiii. 29; Heb. iv. 12; Eph. vi. 17).

7. The *seed,* to beget souls in God's image, and to plant the world-wide field for the harvest of the kingdom (James i. 18; 1 Peter i. 23; Matt. xiii).

Laws of Prophecy

Genesis xxxvii., which contains Joseph's prophetic dreams, is a chapter on Prophecy, and the earliest extended example in the Bible. It sets forth seven fundamental laws of prophetic utterances:

1. Prophecy makes Divine Sovereignty the main lesson: God always the central figure.

2. All human beings are but instruments of His will, whether willing or unwilling.

3. The parabolic form is commonly used in inspired prediction.

4. Remoteness of time and minuteness of detail attest the prophecy as of God.

5. Human antagonism is anticipated in the attempt to defeat the prediction.

6. The very means used to thwart are efficient to fulfil.

7. There is often a double application of prophecy, the literal and the typical.

The Priesthood of Believers

THE Priest performed three functions.

1. At the Altar, offering sacrifice.
2. Within the veil, making intercession.
3. Outside, pronouncing blessing.

These correspond to

Suffering—(self-sacrifice).
Supplication—(intercession).
Service—(conferring blessing).

The first to hands pierced, as in crucifixion;
The second to hands clasped, as in prayer;
The third to hands extended in benediction.

The suffering of saints in all ages is threefold.

1. Temptation by Satan.
2. Inappreciation by men.
3. Rejection and condemnation by the world.

Man's Misconstruction of God

"These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes."—*Psalm l.* 21.

THIS text has four most important thoughts, which can be seen best by a parallel presentation: "These things hast thou done:" man's course of sin. "And I kept silence:" God's course of silence. "Thou thoughtest," etc.: man's misconstruction of God. "But I will reprove thee:" God's self-vindication, etc.

1. *Man's sin.* A double charge is brought in this psalm: first against the saints, who have offered sacrifice in a self-righteous spirit and with formal obedience only; and, secondly, against sinners who have hated instruction, joined hands with the wicked, and maligned God's children.

2. *God's silence.* God's method of dealing with sin is peculiar and significant. At the outset He stamped every sin with divine disapproval by some marked judgment. Every form of sin has once at least met immediate and condign judgment—murder, in Cain; sacrilege, in Achan; rebellion, in Korah, and so Sabbath-breaking, adultery, etc. God makes an example of an offender, and then forbears, postponing punishment until a future day. But that one example is meant for a perpetual warning. God's permanent attitude toward that sin is once for all revealed.

3. *Man's misconstruction.* He interprets God's silence as indifference, hesitation, vacillation. He judges God to be such as himself. There are at least seven types of character which are virtually attributed to God, as Ruler over men, and which types are common among those in authority:

(*a*) The Demagogue, (*b*) the Tyrant, (*c*) the unjust Judge, (*d*) the venal Ruler, (*e*) the capricious Partisan, (*f*) the careless Avenger, (*g*) the easy Voluptuary; and it is plain that from neither of these can an equitable administration be secured. Such will be affected by all sorts of improper motives: greed, lust, partiality, popularity, caprice, ambition, passion. If men judge God to be such a God, they may hope to escape.

4. *God's self-vindication.* He does reprove sin, and arrays the offences of impenitent transgressors before them. The figure is that of an army and its battalions marshalled in array. What a conception—regiments of lies, lusts, unremembered words and deeds and thoughts. Compare Ps. cxxxix.: "In thy book all my members

were written." This probably means all the events of my yet undeveloped history. So in God's book of remembrance all our past lives are written. Not a fact escapes God, or a thought or intent. What a prayer: "Enter not into judgment with they servant!"

It is a curious and significant fact that the Bible history contains at least one example of a condign judgment visited upon transgressors of each particular command of the decalogue.

1. Idolatry or Polytheism. Priests of Baal and Elijah.
2. Image Worship. The Plague at Sinai.
3. Profanity and Blasphemy. Herod, Acts xii.
4. Sabbath-breaking. Man gathering sticks, Numb. xv. 32-36.
5. Dishonouring Parents. Absalom.
6. Murder. Cain.
7. Adultery. David.
8. Stealing. Achan.
9. False-witness. Ananias and Sapphira.
10. Covetousness. Ahab and Jezebel, Elisha's servant Gehazi.

The Word "Seal"

Examining Scripture usage, we find that the word seal is used in the Word of God in seven senses:

1. Authority, as in Esther viii. 8.
2. Authenticity or attestation as genuine, John iii. 33, vi. 27.
3. Inviolability, Matt. xxvii. 66.
4. Approval or sanction, Eph. i. 13.
5. Completeness, Dan. ix. 24.
6. Secrecy, Isa. xxix. 11.
7. Security, Rev. vii. 3.

Steps Up the Mount

"That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."—*Ephes. i.* 12-14.

This epistle is the Alps of the New Testament, and here is the first mountain peak in the range. It is well to note the steps by which we ascend to the summit.

1. Ye heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation.

2. "After that" ye believed—"in whom ye trusted."

3. "After that"—ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of your inheritance.

4. Until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.

Here we have four great stages in the ascent, and each presents a double truth; but the whole history of a believing soul is here outlined, from the first hearing of the message to the final entrance into glory.

It will richly repay us to meditate on these great steps of the upward climb to glory.

1. Ye heard the Word of Truth—the Gospel of your salvation. Faith comes by hearing. And the first sign that hearing is to be unto salvation is that the Word of God is felt to be not cunningly devised fables—verities, not speculations—the Truth, to be "bought" at any price but sold at none: and that here alone is the good tidings of salvation. It might be truth and not a gospel of salvation. But the grand thing about it is that it saves the penitent and believing soul. No other religion ever answers the question, "What must I do to be saved?"

2. After hearing comes believing and trusting. We believe a message, we trust a person. No belief is saving until it leads to trust, and trust means a commitment. Abram believed in the Lord (Gen. xv. 6), literally he "amened the Lord." Amen means "it shall be," *i.e.*, when God promised, although the thing promised was to the last degree humanly impossible, Abram counted God's promise as good as God's performance. So, Paul in the shipwreck said to his fellow-passengers, and now "I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me." He "amened" God as Abram had before him. To believe so that you trust is saving faith.

3. Next comes the sealing of the Spirit. Sealing is an act of attestation—it confirms a document. And here the sealing of the Spirit evidently means God's attestation of the believer as His own. "Having this seal: the Lord knoweth them that are His."

Grace

THE word "grace" occurs between two and three hundred times in the Bible, but principally in the New Testament. The Hebrew and the Greek words both carry the same conception—*favour without respect of merit;* and hence include the idea of rejoicing and thanksgiving such as is natural when the good bestowed is both without regard to the desert of the recipient and without measure on the part of the bestower. All these thoughts belong to the Biblical conception of grace, which thus points at once to the boundless liberality of the giver and the boundless unworthiness of the receiver.

So prominent is grace in the New Testament that the Gospel is called the "Word of his grace" (Acts xiv. 3); the Holy Spirit the "Spirit of Grace" (Heb. x. 29), and God Himself the "God of grace" (1 Peter v. 10).

The main emphasis, however, is on the *infinite and*

indescribable riches or abundance of grace. To give expression to this thought the possibilities of language are taxed to the utmost. For example, take the following leading passages, arranged in climacteric order:

Ephes. i. 7, 8: "According to the riches of his grace, wherein he hath abounded toward us," etc. The very word *riches,* as applied to grace, suggests an infinite and inexhaustible supply; for the riches of God, unlike the wealth of man, have absolutely no limit. The Greek word for riches, πλουτος, is kindred with πολυς, πλειων, much, more, and is from the same root, carrying the idea of abundance. The English word, *rich,* is probably from the Gothic *reiks,* a ruler, because he alone had large possessions.

But this conception is not enough; the word *abounded* must be added: περισσευω means to be over and above, superfluous. The riches of grace are so abundant toward us as to be in excess of all demands made upon them even by our measureless unworthiness, sin and need. This is the one great conception of grace ever before the mind of Paul.

Comp. Rom. v. 15: "Much more the grace of God and the gift by grace . . . hath abounded unto many." Here the same word is used. Many as are they who avail themselves of it, and many as are the occasions when they draw upon it, there is still left infinite abundance.

2. Cor. ix. 14: "The exceeding grace of God"—υπερβαλλουσαν: whence comes the word *hyperbole,* meaning what passes a limit—like an arrow shot beyond its mark, or a vessel that boils over—conveying a notion of what is excessive, surpassing, preeminent, or supereminent.

1 Peter iv. 10: "The manifold grace"—ποικιλης; literally, variegated; that is, infinite in the variety both of form or complexion and fitness or adaptation. God in grace as in nature, a God of infinite variety and adapt-

ability. His grace has countless forms of manifestation, as plants have countless peculiarities of form and fashion, hue and fragrance. To Him the Church is a garden, no two plants alike, yet all fruits of the same grace. The same Lord delivers from every evil work, qualifies for every service, and preserves through every trial and temptation, the trusting soul.

Ephes. ii. 7: "The exceeding riches of his grace." Here the two words are combined, found separately in Ephes. i. 7 and 2 Cor. ix. 14, with a corresponding ascent or accumulation in emphasis. It is grace, riches of grace, superabounding riches of grace.

Ephes. iii. 8: "The unsearchable riches" ἀνεξιχνιαστον: not to be traced out—what defies search or full exploration. Compare Rom. xi. 33, where two words are used, and both quite untranslatable. When we survey the wonders of God's dealings with man we look down into an infinite depth and up into an infinite height; and both defy our utmost efforts to search or trace them out. We can only exclaim, "Oh, the depth! Oh, the height!"

1 Tim. i. 14: "Exceeding abundant" ὑπερεπλεοναsεν—a compound word, and each part carrying the idea of excess; πλεοναξω means to do, or to be, more than enough, and ὑπερ means excessively. This word carries the idea of an excess which is beyond excess; not an overflow simply, but a copious overflow—like an opening of the windows of heaven in the Deluge.

The subject as a whole is overwhelming. Grace is presented before us as pure and unselfish and unmixed benevolence—Love—extending favour to the undeserving and ill-deserving. As Guthrie said: "Man's misery, not his merit, is the magnet that draws the Saviour from the skies."

Hence we are prepared for displays of forgiveness that distance all comparison. Sin is "blotted out," as records were erased from a wax tablet by inverting

the stylus and pressing back the wax into the cavities; removed, as a "thick cloud" dispersed by the wind and heat; "put away," as that which is cast "behind the back," and can no more be seen; or "into the depths of the sea," whence it cannot be dredged up. Hence the universality and liberality of Gospel offers and invitations. Whosoever, whensoever, wheresoever, whatsoever—these are God's universal terms.

As the sea was calm for the sailors when Jonah was heaved overboard, Jesus was delivered over to death and judgment that for us there should be no storm of Divine wrath; all is henceforth peace to the believer.

The abundance of grace is inexpressible and inconceivable. Its munificence and magnificence defy all words. The Persians could only say of God's eternity, *Zeruane akerene*—time without bounds. And we can only say of His love, it is grace without limit. "As the heaven is high above the earth, . . . as far as the east is from the west."—Psalm ciii.

The whole Godhead is at the disposal of the believer.

A Lesson on Small Numbers

"Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."—*Matthew xviii.* 19. 20.

This lesson on the *power of the fewest number* that can possibly meet together, is the climax of the teaching of our Lord here on small numbers. Compare verse 5: "Whoso shall receive *one* such child in my name receiveth me"; ver. 6: "Whoso shall cause to offend *one* of these little ones"; ver. 12: "And *one* of them be gone astray"; ver. 14: "That *one* of these little ones should perish"; ver. 15: "Go and tell him his fault between

thee and him *alone*"; ver. 16: "Take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of *two or three* witnesses every word may be established"; ver. 19: "If *two* of you shall agree"—symphonise; ver. 20: "For where *two or three are gathered* together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Note the sevenfold repetition of this truth, and ascending steps:

1. To receive one is to receive Christ.
2. To offend one is to incur judgment.
3. To despise one is to despise what God cherishes.
4. For one to perish is against the will of redeeming love.
5. For one to trespass is a challenge to restoring love.
6. Two or three witnesses sufficient to establish testimony.
7. Two or three agreeing worshippers enough to claim the presence and power of God.

About this climacteric teaching notice:

1. The agreement of two or three.
2. The prayer of two or three.
3. The gathering together of two or three.
4. The presence of Christ with two or three.

Men associate power with numbers—a crowd, a throng; with a few, weakness. But God associates every element of success in spiritual matters not with the many, but the few, if the *conditions are normal.* The smallest number that can gather, two or three, have the unlimited promise that whatsoever they ask shall be done, provided only that the meeting is in His name and the asking is in agreement. His Name is His nature or person. To meet in His name is therefore to meet by virtue of mutual relation to Christ. To agree is manifestly to be brought into harmony with each other and with Him by one indwelling Spirit. Hence such meeting and asking involve all possible results, because of the presence and power of the Almighty One, to whom numbers are indifferent. It is with Him to save by

many or by few, since the power is in Him, not in them. The electric power is not in the wires, but in the battery; and the power depends not on the number of conductors, but on the force generated at the dynamo; the only question is how to get such good conductors as to secure unbroken and uninterrupted connection with the generator of the current.

This is one of the greatest truths to be learned in the spiritual sphere.

Dealing with Sin

1 John i. 8—ii. 2.

Four ways of *dealing with sin* are suggested.

1. *Denying* it—verses 8, 10—in which case we are fooling ourselves and giving the lie to God. The expressions, "If we say that we have *no sin*," and "That we have *not sinned*," are designedly different: the former covers the sinful *nature*, and the latter the sinful *acts*. To deny the former is to impeach our own moral sanity; and to deny the latter is to impeach the divine veracity. To justify God is to condemn ourselves. To justify ourselves is to condemn God.

2. *Confessing* it. This manifestly includes conviction, confession, and confidence in Atoning Love—ver. 9; and there is a beautiful touch of the Spirit here in the use of the words, "He is *faithful* and *just* to forgive and cleanse." Obviously, forgiveness is not due primarily to God's fidelity and justice, but to His mercy and love. But when, in mercy and love He gives His promise, His faithfulness and justice demand its fulfilment. A like change of words is found in Micah vii. 20. What was originally God's *mercy* to Abraham became a matter of *truth* to Jacob.

3. *Ceasing* from it—chap. ii. 1. "These things write I unto you *that ye might not go on sinning*." "These

things"—the counsels of the Epistle—are full of practical helps to not sinning—mainly three:

(1) The word of God abiding in us strengthens us for conflicts with Satan.

(2) The seed of God abiding in us imparts a new tendency to holiness.

(3) The Spirit of God abiding in us gives a new power to overcome (ii. 14; iii. 9; iv. 4.) And if the forgiven sinner really understands his position and privilege, he will actually overcome the wicked one.

4. *Falling* into sin—*i.e.,* after forgiveness. As a matter of fact, all disciples *do* sin—even after the power of sinful habit is broken. The refuge—the Paraclete, is Jesus, who is also the propitiatory or mercy-seat—the permanent medium of fellowship with God. Peter fell into sin after he became a disciple and apostle; but the prayers of Jesus restored him, etc. *Compare* Luke xxii. 31-62. Those who have chosen the way of obedience still stumble into sin and fall short of perfection, and so need the perpetual advocacy of the Son of God

When these four exhaustive teachings on sin are mastered, there is nothing left to be said on the subject. It is all here in a nutshell.

Each of these might be treated in a separate sermon under four heads:

I.—*Denying* sin:
1. Self-deception.
2. Making God a liar.
3. Rejecting His verdict.

II.—*Confessing* sin:
1. Admitting our guilt.
2. Forsaking our evil-doing.
3. Accepting ransom, etc.

III.—*Ceasing* from sin:
1. By the sword of the Word.
2. By the new nature.
3. By the power of the Spirit.

IV.—*Falling* into sin:

1. A new confession.
2. The medium of fellowship.
3. The Living Advocate.

Christ's advocacy on Peter's behalf *preceded* Peter's own repentance. And so we have a Paraclete, and His prayers prevent our faith from failing utterly. The sinning disciple would never *come back* from his wanderings but for His intercession; David was not recovered from his crime until the Lord sent Nathan to him (2 Sam. xii. 1-13).

Principles of Holy Living

TWELVE principles of holy living are given in Bible language, all of them to be constant and habitual:

I.—*It is a life of habitual Submission.*

"Submit yourselves therefore unto God."—James iv. 7.

"Yield yourselves unto God."—Rom. vi. 13.

In both cases, observe, this implies resistance to all demands of Satan and sin. See the context.

II.—*It is a life of habitual believing.*

2 Chron. xx. 20. A remarkable chapter. Valley of Berachah or Blessing. Comp. Isa. vii. 9, and marginal reading. Believing and blessing, *inseparably* linked.

Heb. xi. 6: "He that cometh to God must believe," etc. Unbelief makes all true obedience impossible.

III.—*It is a life of Witnessing.*

Acts i. 8: "Ye shall be witnesses unto me."

Whatever blessing received, confess it and give all glory to God.

Acts xxvi. 16: "And a witness"—both of past and future grace and blessing.

IV.—*It is a life of Self-denial.*

Matt. xvi. 24, 25. "Deny *himself*"; not here and there an indulgence only.

"He that will *save* his life, shall *lose* it."

Not only all *sin,* but all doubtful indulgences and *weights,* to be laid aside. Heb. xii. 1.

V.—*It is a life of Vigilance.*

1 Peter v. 8: "Be sober, be vigilant."

Rev. xvi. 15. A reference to the temple watchman, liable to lose his garment if found asleep by the guard.

"*Always* watching."—Ephes. vi. 18.

A trifling spirit, a carnal tongue, must be guarded.

VI.—*It is a life of Meditation on the Word.*

Psalm i. 2, 3.—God's prescription for prosperity.

Our Daily food—"*Day and Night.*" Comp. Joshua i.; James i. 25.

VII.—*It is a life of Prayer.*

Matt. vi. 6. "Enter into thy closet."

"Stay before God till He melts you, and then stay when you are melted."

"Pray without ceasing." 1 Thess. v. 17.

VIII.—*It is a life of Obedience.*

1 Peter i. 14-16. Very important.

Acts v. 32. Continued and increasing enjoyment of the *Spirit* depends on it. His slightest motions and suggestions must be heeded.—Ephes. iv. 30.

IX.—*It is a life of Growth.*

2 Peter iii. 18: "*Grow* in grace."

Phil. iii. 13, 14: "I press toward the mark for the prize," etc. We move always *forward or backward;* there is no standing still.

X.—*It is a life of Abiding in Christ.*

John xv. 1-11.

1 Cor. vii. 20, 24. Abiding *with God* in our calling, whatever it be. Comp. Exod. xxxi. 1-5. The Spirit of God called and filled men for ordinary work in metals, wood, etc.

XI.—*It is a life of Waiting on God.*

"As the eyes of servants."—Psalm cxxiii. 1, 2.

"I will guide thee with mine eye."—Psalm xxxii. 8.

What an *eye*—how awful: "Thou, God, seest me!" Yet how blest, if we are habitually waiting on His glance!

XII.—*It is a life of Working with God.*

2 Cor. vi. 1: "Workers together with him."

"Of whom I *travail* in birth," says Paul, reminding us of Christ's "travail of soul."—Gal. iv. 19; Isa. liii. 11.

Love without labour *cools* and *dies*. Co-working with God keeps our fellowship close and warm.

The Eye and Truth

The comparison of Scripture with Scripture suggests *sevenfold* truth about the spiritual vision. What the eye is to the body the understanding is to the man—it enables him to *see the truth*. Hence the use and abuse of the understanding may be illustrated by the normal and abnormal conditions of vision.

1. The *healthy* eye (Eccles. xi. 7). To such an eye light is a boon and a balm. The eye is made for light and light for the eye. The eye easily and naturally receives and immediately adjusts itself to the light by its wonderful structure. So the healthy understanding finds the sunlight of truth pleasant, and delights in it. Truth and such an understanding are naturally fitted to each other.

2. The *diseased* eye (Rev. vi. 16). An inflamed or weak vision dreads the light, and is subjected by it to the greatest pain and distress. A diseased understanding flees before the glory of God, because it is the glory of holiness which inflicts a torture corresponding to the delight of a healthy soul (comp. John iii. 19-20). He that doeth evil hateth the light. Intellectual and moral dishonesty can not stand the searching ray of truth.

3. The *evil* eye (Matt. vi. 22, 23). These words refer to a confused and double vision, in which perspective and

localising power is gone; no true perception of form, figure, distance, dimension, and perhaps of colour. (1 Cor. ii. 14.) The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit. He discerneth not. Aristotle defines truth as what a thing is in itself, in its relations, and in the *medium by which it is viewed.*

4. The *imperfect* eye, or *defective* eye (2 Peter i. 9). "Can not see afar off"—near-sighted instead of far-sighted. Truth may be distorted by defective understanding as by a convex or concave lens.

5. The *closed* eye (Acts xxviii. 27). There are three ways of excluding light: (1) By a veil (2 Cor. iii. 14); minds blinded by a veil of unbelief and prejudice. (2) By contraction as when bigotry narrows visual power. Dr. O. W. Holmes compares a bigot's mind to the pupil of the eye; the more light you pour upon it the more it contracts. (3) By actual closure—shutting out all impressions.

6. The *blind* eye, whose vision is destroyed. This again may be by *cataract, cautery,* or *injury,* or simple loss of *capacity* to see. One may, like prisoners in the Bastile, get so accustomed to *darkness* as to be unable to bear light, and prefer the cell to the freedom of the open day (Rom. i. 21-28).

7. The *open* eye (Ephes. i. 17, 18). Whenever the understanding and heart are healthy and open to the truth there follow three results:—(1) Discernment of truth. (2) Assimilation to it (2 Cor. iii. 18.) We behold, reflect, retain, and come to resemble the image of Christ. (3) Transformation of the whole man.

Note—That in the very nature of the case no diseased or blinded eye can be operated on by its possessor; for the first condition of such operation is a healthy eye to see with (comp. Matt. vii. 3-5). "Anoint thine eyes with eye salve" (Rev. iii. 18).

The Believer's Crucifixion

"I am crucified with Christ."—*Gal. ii.* 20.

THIS is the key-note to this epistle. It is also the key-note to a complete, victorious, and joyful Christian life—Identification with Christ *in crucifixion*—Christ our representative. Last Adam. Hence His acts representative acts.

He loved me and gave Himself for me; that is, *in my stead.* Judicially, I am regarded by God as having done and suffered what He did and suffered. The secret of holy living is to make actual and practical and real this judicial identity with Him. This is no mere fiction of fancy; it is the one great truth of the New Testament.

Four times in this Epistle we are brought to the Cross of Christ, there to learn our *new* relations to the *law,* the *self-life,* the *flesh,* and the *world.*

1. I through the law am dead to the law that I might live unto God—through the law that brought Christ to the Cross I have died to the law. I am thus crucified to the law, when I die to all hope of the law as my justification, and to all fear of the law as my condemnation. The law can never justify me, because I have transgressed it. It can never condemn me, because another has paid the penalty.

2. They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. The flesh stands not only for the body and its animal desires, but for the whole carnal nature with its unholy lusts. The peculiar snare of the flesh is that it magnifies the pleasures of the carnal nature, and so leads us into sin.

We die to the flesh when every known sin, however pleasureable, is renounced finally and for ever; and when pleasures of the flesh, however lawful in themselves, are no longer sought merely for pleasure's sake. God has

connected pleasure with the gratification of our appetites, but we never die to the flesh until no longer the pleasures of appetite are an *end*—when we eat to live, not live to eat, etc.

3. "The world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." Here is a double crucifixion, and the only one referred to in Scripture. The world represents the whole temporal and material order—the spirit of the *age*.

We die to the world when the world becomes to us an object of derision, and when we, as crucified to the world, consent to become the object of its derision.

We learn to deride the world because we discover the hollowness and shallowness of its joys and treasures. We accept its derision when we learn that the world cannot understand or love a child of God because it cannot understand or love God. "If the world hate you," etc.

4. The self life is to be crucified. This is the last to die, yet without its death holy living is impossible.

It dies when self-indulgence ceases to be the law of life. But no mere denial of indulgence is enough. This is like cutting off a branch of a tree, here or there, leaving the vitality of the tree thus to develop more fully in the other branches. Christ says, deny thy*self*. The axe is to be laid at the root of the tree. Self must cease to be the controlling power and the life find a new centre in the will of God.

A Parable of Reconciliation

"Agree with thine adversary," etc.—*Matt. v.* 25.

May it not be possible that there is here a higher meaning than at first appears, a possible parable of the relations of God to the sinner?

1. The *Adversary*, God Himself. "He is become thine adversary" (1 Sam. xxviii. 16).

"Agree with Him quickly." Submit to His righteous commands and demands while He meets thee in the way of offered reconciliation, lest He deliver thee to

2. The *Judge,* the Lord Jesus, whom He has appointed to the judicial office because He is the Son of man as well as of God (John v. 27). And the Judge deliver thee to

3. The *Officer.* Angels seem to be appointed to this awful position (comp. Matt. xiii. 30, 39, 49), and thou be cast into

4. *Prison*-hell. How then shall the debt be paid which now He who is to be thy Judge offers as thy Redeemer to pay for thee?

Spirit, Soul, Body

God designed that the spirit, the recipient of His Holy Spirit, and that which unites man to God, should stand *first,* ruling soul and body.

In the *natural* man, the animal soul is first, subordinating the spirit, which is sunk into subserviency to the soul, which is earthly in nature, aim, and motive.

In the *carnal* man, the flesh, the lowest element, and most earthly, corrupt and fleshly, reigns paramount.

In redemption, the three take their true relation.

In the ungodly, the soul, severed from the spirit, has for ever an animal life, a carnal life, incapable of union with God—a living death of *spirit.*

In sanctification, first the spirit is united with God's Spirit; then it rules the soul, and the soul the body. Sometimes, more ruling the *body* than the *soul;* hence ascetic practice with wrong doctrine; or ruling the *soul* and not the body, hence right thoughts, convictions, and beliefs, but unsubdued appetites and lusts.

The Actual Deliverance from Sin

"Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body."—*Rom. vi.* 12-23.

HERE we pass, in Paul's argument, from standing to state, and meet a great sevenfold truth again. "*Yield*" is the key-word.

Negatively: Yield *not* to reign of sin in your members.

Positively: Yield yourself and your members—in faith to God's enabling grace or *power;* in obedience to "form" of *teaching;* in acceptance of *gift* of God.

Sanctification is needful to save the sinner from the power of his sin and to save the character of God from complicity with his sinfulness.

Yield not. This implies both *privilege* and *power.*

1. *Ground* of resistance. Identification with Christ as our representative in temptation and conquest (comp. Adam and last Adam in Rom. v. and 1 Cor. xv.).

2. *Mode* of resistance. "*Word of God.*"

3. *Attitude* of resistance. "Stand." Wrong notions are often held as to "struggling." The testimony of James, Peter, John, and Paul is uniform. We are to resist the devil, standing in full armour of God.

4. *Faith* of resistance. The prince of this world *is* judged already, and his power broken by the Lord Jesus.

Yield. There is always a positive side to duty.

Human wisdom says, *fight* and struggle. Divine Wisdom says, yield unto God (comp. Rom. xii. 2, 21).

1. Furthermore, we are not under law, but grace.

2. We are to receive the impress of the mould of doctrine.

3. Put off—put on—Col. ii., iii.

4. Claim and take gift of God, and so appropriate fulness of blessing.

Sin—A Disease

Dr. James F. Duncan treats disease as an illustration of spiritual truth, figuratively expressing soul conditions as under the control of sin. He instances:

I.—Leprosy, and the following particulars:

1. It excluded the leper from intercourse with the rest of the community, even from kin and friends, and from privileges of worship.

2. It rendered his condition most miserable, helpless, and hopeless.

3. Its duration was indefinite.

4. It attracted not pity and sympathy, but awakened horror and disgust.

5. It affected not only persons, but things, houses, clothes, furniture, being polluted.

6. It was progressive, never stationary—a constitutional distemper.

7. It might have but slight external sign, like a small spot in the forehead, and yet be as dangerous and deep-seated, etc.

8. It was incurable by human means, even the ministry of the sanctuary being powerless to cure it.

It was therefore a parable of sin, death, and judgment.

II.—Insanity. He selects one or two forms—as when a man, in apparent health of body and mind, behaves so as to show others he is not in his right mind. Insanity has many symptoms:

1. It is impossible to convince the insane that they are such. To them all the world is abnormal but themselves.

2. In monomania the delusion is upon *one* subject only. There is soundness of mind except at this point; but here the lack of mental equilibrium is seen.

3. In melancholia there is an unaccountable aversion even to those most loved, and to what would normally attract.

4. The insane go from extreme to extreme in reasoning, resorting to the most absurd positions to escape the force of sound argument, and credulous to the last degree as to their delusions.

III.—Blindness. Three forms are instanced:

1. Amaurosis, in which impediment exists, not to the entrance of the rays of light to the eye, but to the transmission of impressions to the brain.

2. Cataract, in which the lens itself is converted into an opaque mass.

3. Inflammation, in which the proper texture of other tissues of the eye is destroyed.

These are taken as types of man's normal ignorance of spiritual things, his unconquerable prejudice against Divine truth, etc.

IV.—*Paralysis,* whether affecting nerves of motion or of sensation, and whether partial or total:

1. Rendering a limb powerless to move or insensible to feeling.

2. Impairing without destroying the sensory or motor nerves, or both.

3. Making the steps unsteady, stiff, and awkward, or the response of feeling uncertain and unequal.

V.—*Aneurism* in the chest or abdomen:

1. Absence of any alarming symptoms, so that one may walk on the verge of the grave unconsciously.

2. A deep and deadly disease meanwhile gnawing at the vitals.

Likewise Dr. Duncan shows that in God's dealings with spiritual ailments He is the great Physician, and analogies exist between His methods and those of skilful and competent doctors of disease:

1. He needs an unconditional surrender to His mode of treatment. The very obscurity of His methods is an advantage since it leads a trusting soul to more complete submission.

2. He has a thorough acquaintance with the malady

He treats—the nature of the disease, its seat, working, effects—and of the remedies needful.

3. He directs the treatment without consultation with the patient, which would be a division of responsibility and a confession of incompetency. It would also set the patient to inquiring whether the Physician may not be mistaken, etc.

4. No patient is capable of forming in his own case a correct opinion, since it is part of the disease that it beclouds the mental faculties and deceives even the most intelligent by outward symptoms.

5. God does not hesitate to prescribe and use remedies which are fitted to relieve and to cure, because they are bitter to the taste or severe in their operation. Even so, the physician lays aside every personal consideration, and even risks the patient's personal friendship for the sake of saving his life or health, as in the use of the knife in amputation, the lance in opening a boil or felon, probing a deep-seated ulcer, inserting an issue or a seton to ward off a great danger.

6. God finds it needful often to enlarge a wound with a view to its ultimate healing—as an ulcer's edges are often freely cut and the opening enlarged that pent-up matter may escape and the healing begin at the bottom. To apply a salve or poultice when the knife is needed is malpractice.

7. God knows how to discriminate between remedies. A true doctor never uses a cathartic where an emetic is needful, nor a tonic in place of a narcotic, or reversely.

8. God's severest measures are salvatory, as when a gangrened limb is cut off to save life—to prevent mortification from spreading upward or toward the vital centre. He cuts out or cuts off putrid affections of a carnal nature, to arrest the corroding process, that, however mutilated, may not be destroyed, etc.

Two Narratives Compared

Luke xviii. 35-43 and *xix.* 1-10.

THESE two narratives of blind Bartimeus and Publican Zaccheus seem to belong together, and we have here an illustration of the infelicity of the chapter division as it separates these narratives. As we study them they seem to be intended as companion accounts, illustrating three diversities; first, the diversity of human need; second, the diversity of modes of approach to Christ; and third, the diversity of Christ's dealing with souls; while, beneath all this diversity, is the sublime unity of the love and compassion of Christ and the fact of a full salvation. Let us put in opposite columns the contrast between these two:

BARTIMEUS.	ZACCHEUS.
Poor beggar.	Rich publican.
Blind.	Seeing.
Sat by wayside.	Climbing into a tree.
Intent on getting alms.	Intent on seeing Jesus.
Hears the sound of a moving throng.	Sees the throng passing.
Asks what it means.	Needs no explanation.
Cries after Jesus.	Jesus calls Zaccheus.
The beggar supplicates for mercy.	Christ asks hospitality.
The multitude rebuke him.	They murmur against Christ.
He persists in his prayer.	Christ persists in His purpose.
Jesus stands and waits for the beggar.	Zaccheus stands and declares his purpose.
Christ's question, What wilt thou?	Zaccheus's conscience demanding what is will of God?
He answers, Sight.	He answers, Right.
Jesus says, Receive thy sight.	To Zaccheus, salvation is come.
An immediate cure.	An immediate salvation.
Bartimeus follows Christ in the way, glorifying God, etc.	Zaccheus follows Christ in showing mercy and making restitution, etc.

The contrasts are beautiful and instructive. They show that no two souls have exactly the same history or need. Both were men of Jericho, and both needed Christ. Christ sought both, yet He treated them both in an entirely different manner. But each found blessing at once in contact with the Master and in his own way glorified God.

Prophetic Study

CERTAIN laws or principles to be kept in mind:

1. *Prophetic Vision.* The prophet is a *seer,* one who has a Divine vision of events, whether past, present, or future. If *past,* it is to see them as Divine *preparations;* if present, to see them as Divine *operations;* if future, to see them as Divine *restorations* or fulfilments of His word and will.

2. *Prophetic Tenses.* This follows from the other. God set the events before the vision of the seer and, whether past, present or future, all in equal vividness. And so the prophet describes what he saw, using the present and preterite for the future. He indicates what is ideally, not really, past, seeing things as from God's point of view, who calls things that are not as though they were.

3. *Prophetic Perspective.* When one looks on a landscape from a height, hills and mountains seem near together, between which stretch broad valleys or plains, and the loftier the height the more deceptive the foreshortening and perspective. So, in events foretold, the order, succession, grouping, and relative remoteness are to be judged by this law of perspective; the time intervals being overlooked by the prophet, perhaps not revealed to him.

4. *Prophetic Double Sense.* This may not always have

been known to the prophet, but in many cases a near event represents in outline, a more distant one on a larger scale, yet closely resembling it, so that the language describing one describes the other, as the prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem may in outline also describe the end of the age, or the return from Babylonian exile, the final outcome of redemption. To the prophet, two events, one near and the other far, may have appeared so related, and so analagous, that in portraying in words what he saw in inspired vision, he describes both alike in simple fidelity to what was shown him in such vision.

5. *Prophetic Viewpoint.* There were three points from which God might reveal events: (1) He might station the prophet where he saw the *past* and its divine meaning, looking backward. (2) He might station him where the *future* is unveiled in its final fulfilment of God's eternal plan, looking forward. (3) He might locate the seer *between*—in the midst of events and looking both ways, as when a prophet was permitted to take his stand where, to his view, the humiliation of Christ was past and His glorification was yet to come.

Such simple and obvious laws as these, being applied to prophecy, might often prevent the student from stumbling over a prophetic utterance and to his own damage. We have found these principles so applicable and helpful that they have unlocked every mystery of prophetic study.

Heavenly and Earthly Wisdom

James iii. 15-17.

Comp. John viii. 21-24, and note the plain connection of the two passages, as also James iii. 6, together with the teachings in the Old Testament as to *fire* from heaven and from hell. Nothing was more holy than the *fire upon*

God's altar—the great expression for the holiness before which mere nature cannot stand, and which the perfectness of Christ, and even that only as a sacrifice, could meet, endure, or satisfy in our behalf.

On the day when the priests of Israel were first consecrated, fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice, and so, when Elijah restored the broken altar, pleading the cause of Jehovah against the priests of Baal. The grand and awful conception of the Old Testament is that the fire of God comes down from heaven and lights the flame upon the human altar, and that it is expected never to *go out,* the morning and evening sacrifice being so frequent as to keep the fire burning. The symbol is plain and its teaching sublime. God communicates His Spirit unto men, and they are not to quench the sacred flame, but rather to guard it by perpetual vigilance and prayer.

On the contrary, hell is also the place of fire; but it is the fire of unholiness and hatred of God. It kindled the fires of human lust and passion. Witness what James says of the tongue: "It setteth on fire the whole wheel of nature, and it is set on fire of hell."

Thus we have an awful *threefold contrast:* the wisdom from above and beneath—Christ, the devil and the Anti-Christ, "Wisdom from God" and its opposite principle, with the representatives of both—the fire of God and the fire of hell.

The great lesson of all these teachings, combined, is that of *two opposite tendencies;* a gravitation toward God and a gravitation toward evil. It is impossible to *reconcile* them or to be *swayed by both* at the same time. "Ye are from beneath; I am from above." Christ's whole life moved upward—their whole life moved downward, and whither he went they could not come.

This awful subject has a *fourfold* application.

1. The *mystery* of sin and salvation. Hell and heaven. Christ and Satan. Spirit of God and spirit of evil.

2. The *purity* of character, work, and worship. Fire from heaven consuming, refining, etc.

3. Human *history* and its enigmas. Man without God gravitates only towards ruin. Fire of Satan inflaming the world.

4. Human *destiny* and its inexorable law. Which way are you drifting?

It is a most remarkable fact that the Word of God plainly sets forth that the very inventions and discoveries on which men pride themselves are the very means of developing atheistic defiance of God, from Babel until now. Revelation especially shows us that, in the last days, the new civilisation, with its fascination of art and culture and beauty, its fruitful prosperity, even its charity, amity, and human brotherhood will only ripen into the most gigantic system of impiety and utter defiance of God.

The wisdom from beneath is indicated by three words:

The first word means *upon the earth,* as essentially material and temporal. It magnifies matter and the age. The second means *soulical,* the soul being the expression of the *self life in man*—seat of the desires and passions and affections and will. The third refers to the devil and demons as the arch-enemies of God and man. The warning is that Satan schemes to introduce among men a form of *wisdom*—it is *not* obvious *folly*—framed on principles of worldly prudence and self-advancement, but essentially atheistic. It begins by magnifying what is *earthly*—material and temporal things—then it feeds and pampers man's selfishness until he worships self-interest; then it leads on to diabolical hatred of God and Satanic malice and wickedness, and sows seeds of confusion, envy, and strife.

On the contrary, the wisdom from above is *pure,* aiming to be God-like in character, then peaceable, and sows the seeds of righteousness and peace.

Why Was Christ Born?

1. "In Him God was *manifest in the flesh.*" (1 Tim. iii. 16.)

2. "That he might bring us unto God." (1 Peter. iii. 18.)

3. "Lo, I come to do Thy will." (Heb. x. 7.) Magnify law and make it honourable.

4. He was the last Adam—the first Adam being the "figure of Him that was to come." (Rom. v. 14.)

5. "I am come that they might have life, and might have it more abundantly." (John x. 10.)

6. "Leaving us an example that we should follow his steps." (1 Peter ii. 21.)

7. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John iii. 8.)

A Miracle of Grace

The "*dying thief*" was a miracle of grace. Consider seven particulars:

1. "Dost not thou *fear God?*" Showing his apprehension of God as Judge.

2. "We indeed justly" condemned, revealing a sense of guilt and a true humility.

3. "This man hath done nothing amiss." A recognition of the innocence of Christ.

4. "Remember me"—a petition for *least* blessing, for a *thought* on the part of Christ.

5. "When Thou comest in Thy kingdom." Undoubting faith in the Lord's kingship, even in such an hour.

6. Consider his previous life. Every disadvantage and unlikelihood of salvation.

7. Yet no such faith shown by others, even Christ's apostles. The dying thief eclipsed all other believers.

The Riches of Grace

Ephes. iii. 8.

THIS is the epistle of God's riches. There are six prominent references to this infinite wealth of grace: i. 7, 18; ii. 4, 7; iii. 8, 16. Such words as "exceeding" and "unsearchable" serve to show the difficulty of expressing the thought in words. We may study it under two heads:

1. The riches of grace as seen in the saints' inheritance in God (i. 11). 2. The riches of grace as seen in God's inheritance in the saints. (i. 18.)

As to the former we are taught:

(1) He made us alive when dead (ii. 1, 5).

(2) He made us sons (i. 5).

(3) He made us heirs (i. 11).

(4) He gives the earnest or foretaste of the inheritance (i. 13, 14). As to this inheritance, it can be known fully only in the ages to come. It takes a universe to hold it and eternity to unfold it.

As to the latter—God's inheritance in the saints—this thought is even *more* wonderful.

(1) He buys or purchases us for Himself (v. 25, 26).

(2) He makes us anew in Christ (ii. 10).

(3) He carries His work in us to perfection (v. 27).

(4) He comes and dwells in us (ii. 22) and so glorifies us. In Zech. iv. we find a golden candlestick with lamps; in Rev. i. we find the same candlestick, but the lamps have become stars.

The Word of Life

1 *John i.* 1.

THIS is a peculiar expression used only here. Yet it is the key to the epistle.

What is a *word?* It is the expression of a thought. Thought is invisible, inaudible, impalpable. A word is visible and audible and tangible. Something is in the mind, heart, will of God which He would make known unto us. He does it by His *word*: (1) in the Scriptures; (2) in His Son.

Christ, therefore, is the Inner Life of God made manifest.

A word not only expresses, but *conveys.* A spoken word goes through the air by a mysterious process, enters my ear, conveys a thought from another to me, or, on the printed page, to my eye and so to my mind.

As the Word of Life, Christ both *expresses and conveys* the life of God to us so that it becomes our own.

There are thus four stages in the history of a word: (1) Expression; (2) conveyance; (3) possession; (4) fellowship. This is the teaching of the apostle here.

1. Christ was *with* the Father (ver. 2).
2. *Was manifested* to us.
3. We have *heard,* seen, looked upon, handled.
4. He that hath the Son *hath* life, possession.

Further, what are we to do with a word? Simply to hear and understand, *i. e.,* receive it and then repeat it and pass it on as "*witness*"; the result will be that others get blessing—"*fellowship.*" This is the whole teaching of this epistle in a nutshell.

What, now, does this "*Word of Life*" convey? Eternal *life.*

What is in God takes shape in His word, then comes

to us and becomes a thought in us. Life in God, eternal life, takes shape in Christ for the end of conveyance or impartation and becomes life in us.

God has intelligence, affection, will. His intelligence imparted to us becomes *truth, light.* His affection and emotion and attraction, *love.* His will or choice of holiness, *obedience.*

This is the further teaching of this epistle:

How do we know we have received the Word of Life? It becomes in us what it was in *Him.*

Christ as Word of God conveys life, light, and love all at once, as sunbeam conveys light, warmth, and actinic life all at once.

Energetic Doing

"Do with thy might."—*Eccles. ix.* 10.

A LESSON in living. The argument: the brevity, the uncertainty, vanity of life should lead us to use life so as to get from it and work out by it the greatest good. Life has three phases: a past, present, future. We may live in the past by memory, in the future by hope, in the present by energetic will.

I.—Here we have the *true attitude* of living: doing, and not dreaming. To-day is the only reality; yesterday is a ghost, to-morrow a vision. Memory is a snare when we are disheartened by past failures or satisfied with past successes. Spinoza says the greatest foe to progress is conceit and the laziness it begets. Hope ensnares when it allures us into vagaries and castle-building. To some the past is the graveyard of buried friends and hopes, and they sit among the gravestones. With others the future is equally a snare, leading to procrastination, or false expectation; or fear of what yet may be hangs a pall over the soul.

II.—Here is the *nature of action.* What is done is always done *now.* Intentions are not deeds; they pave the way to hell; they promise heaven, but never secure it. There is no to-morrow; when it comes it is to-day. It is a mirage. He who acts, acts in the present.

III.—Here is Life's *true vocation.* This can be only what has and ought to have our might. Michael Angelo wasted his powers on the statue of snow. Only one thing deserves our might; to glorify God here and enjoy Him for ever there. (Eccles. xii. 13.) Literally, this is the *whole of man.*

IV.—Here is life's only *opportunity.* The grave is before us—there work stops. God sets life's hour-glass before us, the sand running out, and says, "Buy up opportunity" (Ephes. v. 16)—*i. e.,* while it can be bought. You may, like Goujon, die with your half-carved statue, life's real work, arrested in half completeness.

Instructions About Suffering

1 Peter iv. 12-19 is a marvellously complete body of instruction about *suffering, and our attitude under it.* It discriminates first of all between two sorts of suffering:

1. Suffering on account of evil-doing.
2. Suffering on account of well-doing.

I.—Under the first, four instances are mentioned:—

(*a*) As a murderer, striking at the *life* of others.

(*b*) As a thief, striking at the *property* of others.

(*c*) As an evil-doer, invading the *rights* of others.

(*d*) As a meddler, interfering with the *affairs* of others.

All suffering consequent on such conduct is not to be rejoiced in, but to cause humiliation and self-reproach.

II.—Of the second class of suffering, four descriptions are given:—

(*a*) Partaking of Christ's suffering.
(*b*) Reproach for the name of Christ.
(*c*) Suffering as a Christian.
(*d*) Suffering according to the will of God.

Touching all such suffering we are

1. Not to account it strange.
2. To rejoice in it.
3. Not to be ashamed of it.
4. To glorify God on this behalf.
5. To commit to Him the keeping of our souls.

Where, in all the volumes ever written, can be found any treatment of this subject so comprehensively exhaustive and completely satisfactory? Every point here demands careful study, for the whole philosophy of the matter is suggested.

The Laodicean Church

THE rebuke to the Laodicean Church (Rev. iii. 15, 16) has more force in it than at first appears. Hot means boiling hot, fervent; and hence cold by contrast means more than negatively cold—icy cold, as water to which heat has not yet been applied. It has been well said that a lukewarm state may be desirable and commendable when it is a *transition* stage between utter coldness and boiling heat. But here it is not commended, but condemned, because it marks a permanent state, not a transitional stage. The fire has been applied, but its power has been exhausted, and the only effect is to reduce the coldness to lukewarmness; and the Laodiceans are satisfied and self-complacent with this halfway condition, like those who feared Jehovah but continued to serve their own gods.

In Solomon's Song (v. 4-6), a spiritual state is described akin to lukewarmness; it is that of drowsiness

when half-way between sleeping and waking. One thinks he is awake, and hears and knows and understands all that is going on, whereas the half sleep makes him dull and listless and no impression is made. What would awake and arouse the sleeper falls unheeded on the drowsy, who imagines he is awake but is not. Hence Our Lord prefers the icy cold to the lukewarm state, because it represents a condition in which grace has not yet been applied or exhausted; whereas lukewarmness leaves no hope of real fervour or ardour and holy zeal.

The whole warning is directed against a *half way surrender to God*—a worldly Christianity—a life of mixed motive, where a man is neither one thing nor another, sufficiently religious not to be alarmed at his worldliness, sufficiently worldly not to be a witness by his godliness, religion enough to lull the conscience into drowsiness and false security, not enough to secure salvation or to fit for service—Christ near enough to be at the door, but not near enough to be within. These are the halters between two opinions, trying to serve God and Mammon; they serve neither the devil wholly nor God fully, but try to compromise the claims of both in a life that is neither devilishly sinful nor divinely holy.

God's Administration

"For if I do this willingly I have a reward; but if against my will, a dispensation of the Gospel is committed unto me."—1 *Cor. ix.* 17.

THIS passage, taken as a whole, seems to let in light upon a very important principle of God's administration. There is a dispensation of duty committed to every man, and there are three ways of meeting it:

1. By refusing it, neglecting, or rejecting it alto-

gether; in this case there is a penalty of rejection as an unfaithful servant. "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel."

2. We may accept the duty and discharge it formally, in a legal spirit as an obligation and necessity laid upon us; in which case we escape the penalty but also forfeit the reward.

3. We may gladly and heartily give ourselves to it, as co-workers with God, feeling it the nearest approach to heaven to be where and to do what He would have us; and this brings *reward,* both here and hereafter. (Comp. 2 Cor. viii. 12.)

Christ's Stewards

A SINGULARLY instructive view of the *ministry* as a *stewardship* is found in 1 Cor. iv. 1-5.

Headship is Christ's only; stewardship is ours. We are His stewards, and, as such, men's servants; not depositories of grace, but rather dispensers of grace.

The Church is modelled after the synagogue, not the temple. In the synagogue was the chazan or overseer. He called seven readers to read the law every Sabbath, and oversaw them. The parnasin took care of the poor, and preached under the control or oversight of the presbyters or bishops. We see the chazan reappear in the bishop or angel of the Church, and the parnasin in the deacon.

To make the Church a temple and the minister a priest, to come between God and the worshipper, is a perversion of New Testament teaching. It puts the priest in the foreground and the Church in the background, exactly reversing God's order. The priest becomes a sort of deputy whereby the disciple approaches and serves God, instead of being a servant of the Church

for Jesus's sake. This leads also to assumption of the monopoly of priestly rights and prerogatives. The believer's priesthood is obscured, if not denied, and, like pagan priests, such officials rather conceal than reveal Divine mysteries, reserving them for the initiated and elect few.

Another lesson here taught is that God's steward awaits no judgment of man, but stands or falls by his Master's judgment. The standard is not his popularity with men, but his fidelity toward God. It is a very small matter, therefore, what is man's judgment of him, though it is not to be treated with contempt except in comparison with the infallible and irreversible judgment of God. The day of man (margin) is contrasted with the day of the Lord, all days of previous judgment being man's days. Moreover, we are taught that self-judgment, however conscientious, is not infallible. A man dare not assume to be his own judge. He may, like Paul, be unconscious of ministerial unfaithfulness, yet he dares not justify himself. He finds, as his senses by exercise come to be qualified more perfectly to discern good and evil, that previous self-judgments have been imperfect and even inaccurate and misleading. Judgment is not infallible. Even conscience is sometimes warped and distorted in decisions, unconsciously swayed by the reason or self-will. Hence the sole final Decider and Adjudicator or Dejudicator is the Lord. Hence all judgments are forbidden which would forestall God's prerogative of ultimate, omniscient, and infallible decision. He alone knows the heart. We hear the spoken word and see the outward act, but He sees the inward motive and spring of all action; and upon *this* especially depends his final "praise." In this sublime teaching how great a body of truth is comprehended.

1. The ministerial *office*—its nature and function.
2. The ministerial *standard*—service, not lordship.
3. The ministerial *criterion*—fidelity, not popularity.

4. The ministerial *judgment*—Divine, not human.

Nowhere else in the Word of God is this whole matter so exhaustively treated, and all within this brief compass. Here is food for thought, material for preaching, and a solid basis for a life of humble and patient service. We especially commend this subject for an installation or ordination sermon or charge, or a *concio ad clerum* when such a theme is specially in order. We need perpetually to remind each other of the true spiritual standard for holy living and serving, that we may get free from the snares into which our feet may constantly fall without diligent watchfulness.

The Living Word and the Written Word

The living Word and the written Word are so inseparably bound together that whatever impairs the integrity and authority of the one correspondingly impairs the integrity and authority of the other. The written Word is the Christ, the living Word, enfolded; the living Word is likewise the written Word unfolded, and they are vitally one. Christ is indeed the foundation of our faith, but that very foundation is laid in the Scripture as a bed-rock. Christ is found in the Scriptures in the letter. The Scriptures are found in Him in the life.

It is very important to guard the word of God from losing its hold upon us as His revelation of Christ. There are two forms of revelation of Christ: first, *to* the soul in the Scriptures; second, *in* the soul by experience of His indwelling. But the Scriptural revelation precedes the experimental, and is its basis, and without the Scriptural the experimental becomes impossible.

It is sometimes said that, even if the Scriptural revelation were destroyed or lost to us, we have still the experimental. But, while this may be true in a sense, after

we have once known Christ experimentally, two important questions arise: First, how did I get the experimental knowledge of Christ except through the Scriptural revelation? And secondly, what is to become of my *preaching*, even if my faith in Christ survives the loss of confidence in the written word? And what of those who have never yet come to believe in Christ and have never had Him revealed in them?

We need only to consult the Scripture to find its own teaching on this subject. Christ Himself says: "Search the Scriptures, for they are they that testify of Me."

The Manifold Significance of the Cross

Anyone who is tempted to think of Christianity apart from the cross should examine, for instance, the prominence which the cross occupies in the *epistles* as well as in the gospels.

In Romans, it is inseparably connected with "propitiation—through faith in his blood." The mercy-seat, or propitiatory, must be sprinkled with the blood of atonement before man can approach it, or even the high priest himself as man's representative. We are taught then that He was delivered over (as to a sheriff) for our offences; and that we are baptised into His death.

In Corinthians, it is Christ crucified who is the power of God and wisdom of God unto salvation. Sanctification and service both hang upon our union with Him on the cross (2 Cor. v. 14, 15).

In Galatians, the believer is represented as crucified with Christ, and so dying to the law both as his accuser and vindicator, to the flesh as the seat of corrupt affections and lusts, to the world as the all-embracing sphere of their indulgence, and to the self-life, most subtle of all foes of God.

In Ephesians, both Jew and Gentile are reconciled

to God, in one body by the Cross. Peace is made with God and with each other by Him who on the cross made one new man. The cross is the sign and seal of Christ's love for the Church for which He gave Himself (v. 25).

In Philippians, "the death of the cross" represents the last and lowest of the seven steps in Christ's self-emptying (chap. ii.), and the perpetual incentive to us to have the same mind in us—sharing the fellowship of His suffering on the way to His joy, by being conformed to His death.

In Colossians the same thought is emphasised, and we are taught the privilege of thus filling up that which is behind of His afflictions in our flesh, for His body's sake (i. 24)—the most remarkable instance of the setting forth of our identity with the crucified Lord.

In Thessalonians, it is He who died for us whom we are to serve and for whom to wait, and with whom we are to live in glory.

In the epistles to Timothy, the crucified is the ransom for all.

In Hebrews, He is declared to have tasted death, suffered death, for every man, and by death destroyed him that had the power of death. His one sacrifice has for ever perfected the believer.

In Peter's epistles, He is the Paschal Lamb, in whose vicarious death all sacrifices found their fulfilment.

In John's epistles, He is the propitiatory, mercy-seat, as in Romans, and the Love of God finds only in His death its full exhibition and efficacy.

The following analysis may exhibit the cross as related to:

I.—*Sin.* Judged in blood, abolished by blood.

II.—*Death.* His death for sin; our death to sin.

III.—*Devil.* Defeated in his triumph; destroyed by His death.

IV.—*World.* Conquest. "I have overcome"; overcome by Christ; overcome by us in Christ.

V.—*Life.* Resurrection, power; example for imitation.

VI.—*Peace* with God—with man.

VII.—*Works.* Dead works purged; perfect works made possible.

VIII.—*Love.* Exhibited in sacrifice; imparted for sacrifice.

IX.—*Self.* Renounced in the old man; devoted in the new man.

X.—*Service.* Through suffering; gain through loss.

Salvation

A SERIES of helpful sermons on as many aspects of *salvation* might be based, for example, on continuous studies in Matthew.

1. Preparation for salvation (chaps. i.-iii).

2. Person of the Saviour; His obedience to the will of God, His words and works (iv.-vii.).

3. Types of salvation as found in miracles (viii.-ix).

4. Salvation, leading to service (ix. 35; xi. 24).

5. Salvation revealed, received, rejected (xi. 25; xvi. 13).

6. Salvation from self (xvi. 14; xx. 28).

7. Salvation as connected with faith, obedience, and love (xx. 29; xxii. 46).

8. Salvation and its consummation—duty of watchfulness (xxiii.-xxv.).

9. Salvation as connected with the death and resurrection of Christ (xxvi.-xxviii.), etc.

The Three Foes

IN three passages of Scripture the world, the flesh, and the devil are presented together as the foes of the be-

liever: Ephes. ii. 2, 3; James iv. 3-7; and 1 John ii. 14-17.

Behind the flesh and the world is our implacable, subtle adversary, the god of this world. He appeals to our carnal natures, presenting what inflames our fleshly lusts. He knows that carnality responds to allurement, and is evermore busy with seducing forms of pleasure. He is behind the world as a stage-manager is back of the scenery of a theatre—"the fashion—*stage scenery*—of this world passeth away" (1 Cor. vii. 31). The world is a stage—and its seductions are mere paint and pasteboard which Satan sets up before us; we have only to get behind them to see their hollow and shallow character. And when they cease to charm, he withdraws them and shoves another lot of paint and pasteboard on the stage. To see Satan behind fleshly lusts and worldly fascinations is to be doubly on our guard. We shall learn that the burning passions that rage so fiercely are set on fire of hell, by his fiery darts, and shall learn to quench them by the shield of faith.

The Eunuch of Ethiopia

Acts viii. 25-40.

Every passage of Scripture has its own unique and individual lesson, nowhere else repeated with such completeness. Here are presented ten related truths:

1. The individualism of grace—one man out of the mass.
2. The love of the Spirit for such a single inquiring soul.
3. The leading of the Spirit in small details of service.
4. The need of human aid in understanding the Word.
5. The simplicity of believing, confessing, and obeying.

6. The preparation made by the Scriptures for reception of Christ.

7. The immediateness of obedience to known duty.

8. The simple test of fitness for receiving sealing ordinances.

9. The co-operation of various agencies in conversion.

10. The close connection between obedience and blessing.

Nowhere else are all these great truths brought out so clearly, in any one passage, in their relation to each other and to God's redemptive plan. Here men and angels, the written Word, the living Word, and the Spirit of God, all unite to secure the salvation of one seeking soul. "He loved *me* and gave himself for *me*."

"Dead Works"

This phrase occurs but twice, and both times in the Epistle to the Hebrews (vi. 1 and ix. 14).

In the first instance it is undoubtedly used of the unregenerate, in the second of the regenerate.

What are dead works? They are simply works which *lack life,* and are therefore not the same as either wicked works or good works. They correspond to "wild fruit," which is not the same as good fruit or bad fruit, having the form and appearance of the good without its flavour and savour. So dead works have all the appearance of the good works, but they have a fatal deficiency; they lack divine vitality. Comp. 1 Cor. xiii. 1-3, where doling out goods to feed poverty and giving the body to the flames are pronounced to be unprofitable if they lack the love which is the life of all true service.

This subject of dead works should be studied with the 19th chapter of Numbers, where the ordinance of the

red heifer is found, to which Hebrews ix. 13 obviously refers. The red heifer was the remedy for all dead works—all contact with the dead, and with death in every form. He that would serve the *living* God must not bring to Him *dead* works. Compare James ii. 26: "The body without the spirit is dead." God cannot be imposed upon by externals. He detects a dead creed, dead forms in worship, dead works of loveless almsgiving and all other outward forms of godliness which lack its power.

Here lies, however, one of the subtlest snares of the devil. He persuades men that a formal righteousness, behind which there is no real allegiance to God and no spiritual life, can commend us to God and be accepted of Him; whereas the first condition of all good works is that they shall be the works of a believer—one made alive unto God by the inward working of the Spirit of Life. (Rom. viii. 2.) When this is lacking the scent of death and decay is in all works, however outwardly proper, and there is the stench of corruption, instead of the savour of a sweet smell, in the nostrils of God, awakening His abhorrence instead of being well-pleasing.

Rebukes of a Wrong Spirit

Luke ix. 46-62.

Here are six rebukes which present some instructive paradoxes:

1. The ambitious would be great and must be willing to be small.

2. The intolerant would forbid and must learn to forbear.

3. The vindictive would destroy but must seek to save.

4. The self-seeking would spare himself, but must learn to deny himself.

5. The procrastinating would delay action, but must learn to make haste.

6. The vacillating lays hold, but must also learn to keep hold.

Our Lord here meets, with wisest and half-concealed cautions, temptations to be *prominent,* to be *exclusive,* to be *resentful,* to be *selfish,* to be *frivolous,* to be *wavering.*

The Two Creations

"If any man be in Christ, he is a *new creation;* old things are passed away: all things are become new."—*2 Cor. v.* 17.

This text may be finely elucidated and illustrated by recurring to the *first mention* of the old creation in Genesis and the last mention of the new creation in Revelation.

In Genesis three features are prominent:

1. Order out of chaos. "God is not the author of confusion."

2. Light out of darkness. "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness," etc.

3. Life out of death. (Rom. viii. 2.)

In Rev. xxi. we have the last glimpse of the new creation. Here again all is superb order, beauty, and symmetry, light and glory, and life eternal. The curse is no more. Sin, for ever banished, all sorrow, sighing, pain, and death flee away.

The believer represents the old fallen creation made over in the new. Disorder and anarchy gone in the rule of God; sorrow and unrest in the perfect peace of God; and death in the perfect life of God.

In the new creation is:

1. A new tendency. An affinity for God.

2. A new fitness. "Prepared unto good works."

3. A new service. "Whose I am and whom I serve."

He who alone could create, alone can recreate.

The Last Command

Matt. xxviii. 18-20.

A THREEFOLD word, a word of *dependence*—"all power"; of *obedience*—"all nations"; of *confidence*—"all days."

An *argument* suggested. "Therefore" because all power is Mine, My presence is yours; therefore Go.

An *admonition* implied. Not to *go* is not to *obey,* and hence a forfeiture of both the manifested *power* and *presence.*

1. DEPENDENCE.

All power—authority and efficiency—*His;* all impotence and weakness, *ours.*

Hence, in work for God, no independence; without Him absolutely *nothing.* God the one *agent,* man only an *instrument.*

The Old Testament is full of this thought, *e. g.,* Book of Judges. Note God's deliverances: by ox-goad—lamps and pitchers—jaw-bone of an ass. Compare Moses' *rod,* the axe, saw, hammer, staff, etc., Isa. x. 15.

Obviously the perfection of an instrument is its passivity—perfectly yielded to the hand of the workman. So, in the New Testament: *vessel*—"earthen," "chosen."

2. OBEDIENCE.

"*Go*"—"teaching to observe all things." Obedience is surrender to authority; implicit compliance with an explicit command.

We are "not to *reason why.*" Reasoning (1) implies delay; (2) Defers to one's own judgment; (3) Waits for conviction of reasonableness.

Responsibility for *results is to be left with God.* Noah preached a hundred years and had not one convert.

Compare Paul at Philippi (Acts xvi.), Philip and the Eunuch (Acts viii.).

Avoid the worship of *success,* which is the modern Mammon.

3. CONFIDENCE.

Promise of blessing. Isa. lv. 10-13: "everlasting sign."

Presence of Christ promised *on the field,* and in the soul of the obedient (John xiv. 23), and His "savour in every place."

Spiritual Gifts

1 COR. xii. teaches us several lessons of great importance as to "spiritual gifts."

1. *Everyone has some gift,* therefore all should be encouraged.

2. *No one has all gifts,* therefore all should be humble.

3. *All gifts are for the one body,* therefore all should be harmonious.

4. *All gifts are from the Lord,* therefore all should be contented.

5. *All gifts are mutually helpful and needful,* therefore all should be studiously faithful.

6. *All gifts promote the health and strength of the whole body,* therefore none can be safely dispensed with.

7. *All gifts depend on His fulness for power,* therefore all should keep in close touch with Him.

Jotham's Parable

Judges ix. 7-20.

THIS first parable in all Scripture is exquisitely adapted to teach two great lessons, beyond its immediate local application:

1. *Contentment with our providentially appointed lot.*

Here we have an allusion to five different vegetable growths, the olive, fig, vine, bramble, cedar. How obviously no one of these possesses the peculiar gifts and capacities of the others. The olive is conspicuous for

its fatness or oil; the fig, for its sweetness or luscious and nutritious fruit; the vine, for its clusters which yield rich nectar; the bramble or thistle, for its sharp points that tear the flesh; and the cedar, for its magnitude, strength of root and branch, length of life and fragrance. Manifestly none of these needs to envy the others, unless it be the worthless bramble or thistle, which seems able only to defend itself and injure others. To each God has given its own sphere and gifts, which are unique. To the olive, oil; to the fig, fruit; to the vine, clusters; to the cedar, wood—how plainly each should be contented with its peculiar quality, office and sphere.

2. *Providential adaptation to our sphere and work.*

It is not accidental that the olive, fig, and vine never attain unto gigantic growth. The most luxuriant olive or fig trees never exceed a very moderate size, somewhat like a peach-tree, or a medium-sized apple-tree. The vine only winds about other trees, having no power to sustain itself. Manifestly none of these are meant to assume supremacy over the greater trees; and, as to the bramble, it is most insignificant of all, never more than a bush, that a mower's scythe cuts down like a weed. Yet here it is this bramble or thistle that alone inspires to lordship! For one thing it is fit,—to burn rapidly and start a fire that may consume even the giant forest growths. But one of the trees here mentioned is fit for supremacy, namely, the gigantic, majestic cedar.

Death and Judgment

"It is appointed unto men, once for all, to die; but after this, the judgment crisis. So Christ was once for all offered to bear the sins of many; and He shall a second time appear without sin, to those who look for Him unto salvation."—*Hebrews ix.* 28.

THIS text is doubly interesting; first, for its *direct teaching,* and secondly, for its *great contrast.*

There is a fixed chronological *order* in God's providence: life, death, judgment. This life, ending in death; then judgment, with a second death, beyond.

There is, however, a blessed order in *grace*. The life of Christ for us, ending in His death in our behalf for sin; then His reappearing to bring our completed salvation, and no judgment, save with respect to awards for service.

This is the only passage presenting *both* aspects.

There is a logical necessity of a judgment after a life of sin. God is a perfect moral Governor. This life offers no adequate opportunity for judgment:

1. Because it is a *probation*. Judgment must be suspended.

2. Because this is a period of *action*, and it is action that demands a review.

Sin often continues until the end, and often worst at the end.

The judgment of God is to even the greatest men the most appalling thought, because of—

1. God's infinite righteousness and equity.

2. His infinite knowledge—omniscience.

3. His infinite power to execute sentence. Nothing evades His knowledge, power, or justice.

Daniel Webster confessed the thought of his personal accountability to God to be the greatest thought that he had ever entertained.

And it is a *final* judgment from which there is no appeal.

The other side of this truth is most glorious.

To believers—life; beyond death, a higher life, and no death beyond.

To him who takes refuge in Jesus there is a *life in Christ* instead of a life in sin.

Then a putting away of sin in Christ's own *death*, and then a completed salvation at His *coming*. Dr. A. J.

Gordon contrasts legal conviction and evangelical conviction thus:—

Legal Conviction.	Evangelical.
1. Sin committed.	1. Sin pardoned.
2. Righteousness impossible.	2. Righteousness imparted.
3. Judgment impending.	3. Judgment abolished.

In the believer's case *death* is not mentioned because it is not contemplated. The Word of God puts before believers the blessed hope of translation without death —of being alive and remaining at His coming.

Two Sorts of Services Contrasted

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."—*Rom. vi.* 23.

This text brings to a close a contrast which runs through the whole chapter, between *servants of sin* and *servants of God* (comp. ver. 20 and 23). The masters are respectively sin and God. The service is expressed in the phrase *yield to obey* (ver. 16).

The results of such service are expressed likewise by three words: fruit, end, and wages in one case; fruit, end, and gift in the other. The word fruit expresses what is naturally produced or brought forth; the word end expresses the ultimate goal toward which all else tends. Wages expresses what is lawfully due and deserved and will be fully paid; while gift is used to indicate the final result of holy living as a destiny too glorious to be earned as wages, deserved as a reward, or won as a prize.

The contrast finds its highest climax in this closing verse. Sin is there put before us as a course of life entitled to wages, and sure to be fully recompensed; whereas eternal life is the gift of God's grace to those

who are in Christ Jesus. Death is both the natural penalty and the judicial punishment of sin. Sin works death by a natural law, as a plant yields fruit; sin demands death as a just recompense for disobedience and dishonour done to God's perfect law. Holiness, on the other hand, is the natural fruit of a true obedience to God, but eternal life, which includes the unalloyed bliss of God's presence and communion, is so ineffably glorious that it can be simply and only the bestowment of infinite love and grace.

Death is but the inevitable fruit and end of all sin. What is *death?* Not extinction of being. The Bible gives us at least three clear hints of what death is: (1) Adam's fall. (2) Rom. viii. 6, 7, and (3) Luke xv. 24-32. It is here seen to involve three things: loss of innocence, and therefore the consciousness of guilt; a carnal mind or an habitually sinful tendency of nature; and third, alienation from God and loss of fellowship.

Eternal life is therefore its exact opposite; it implies guilt removed and holiness restored; a spiritual mind or a change of nature and habit, and communion with God. Death naturally follows sin, and immediately. It followed the first sin in Eden at once, in the day they ate of the forbidden fruit. And as physical death implies increasing decay and corruption, so spiritual death implies a growing power of sin—disobedience ripening into habitual wrong-doing, and so deepening the breach between the soul and holiness.

The Believer's Glorification in Christ

Rom. viii. 17-39.

In ver. 19 we have a significant phrase, "The glory which shall be revealed in us"—reckoned by the writer

so exceeding great that all the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be spoken of in comparison.

This chapter contains the suggestion of some elements which enter into that final glory, and are in part anticipated even here: for one of the peculiar features of a believer's life is that it has on earth a foretaste of the final consummation of joy and perfection.

Conspicuous words of this chapter are:—

1. *Legacy*—as suggested by ver. 17.
2. *Liberty*—the liberty of the sons of God (ver. 21).
3. *Adoption*—here the equivalent of the redemption of our body (ver. 23).
4. *Harmony*—suggested by ver. 28.
5. *Conformity*—to His image (ver. 29).
6. *Victory*—more than conquerors (ver. 37).
7. *Unity*—inseparable union with God (ver. 35-39).

What boundless, illimitable joy and glory are included within the compass of these words! The believer comes to the fulness of privileges as a son in the Father's house and into the fulness of his legacy as an heir of God and joint heir with Christ.

His liberty is perfected, bondage to sin and suffering and infirmity forever broken; the whole being restored to the Divine Image; spirit, soul, and body all conformed and transformed. There is now perfect harmony with God. He is in the Divine plan and purpose, like a wheel in a perfect mechanism, and all other parts of that mechanism work in harmony with his highest well-being. He has victory over all foes of his purity, peace, and power. The law is no longer his foe, for in the obedience and suffering of Christ all its demands are satisfied. Satan dares not accuse, for God justifies and Christ vindicates. Even death is vanquished and swallowed up in life. To all this is added, to complete the believer's glorification, the safety and certainty of perfect and unchanging unity with God. The chapter, which opens by declaring there is now no condemnation to them which

are in Christ Jesus, ends by affirming that there shall be no separation from Him. Without this last all would be incomplete and imperfect. The liberty might be lost and bondage take its place; the sonship might be exchanged for alienation, harmony be displaced by discord, conformity by deformity, victory by defeat. And so the last assurance is that the state and estate of the child of God is eternally unchangeable.

The Good Shepherd

John x. 1-18, 26-30.

THIS is an example of Hidden Symmetry in Scripture.

This chapter contains the summary of all Christ's teaching on Himself as the Good Shepherd and His relation to His sheep. It is a fine illustration of how His teaching, though it is often apparently fragmentary and incomplete, proves, on further and more careful study and analysis, to be singularly comprehensive and systematic. It is a case of concealed art. The skeleton framework does not obtrude itself on the reader, but like a skeleton, supports the living flesh which is its covering and gives it completeness.

The following is an attempt to arrange this teaching so as to reveal this hidden symmetry and synthesis. The capitals indicate the great leading divisions of the thought, and the subordinate clauses reveal the minor divisions which may be grouped under the others.

I. I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

He that entereth not by the door is a thief and robber.	He that entereth by the door is the SHEPHERD of the SHEEP.

II. To Him the Porter Openeth.

And the sheep hear His voice
And . . . He goeth before them.
He calleth His own sheep by name
And leadeth them out.

And the sheep know his voice
And they follow him.

I know my sheep
And am known of mine, etc.

And a stranger will they not follow,
For they know not the voice of strangers.
Ye believe not, because ye are not my sheep.

III. I am the Door of the Sheep.

By Me, if any man enter in,
He shall be saved
And shall go in and out
And find pasture.

All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers,
But the sheep did not hear them.

IV. I Am Come That They Might Have Life,
And might have it more abundantly.

The thief cometh not but for to steal and to kill and to destroy.

V. The Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.
I lay down my life for the sheep.

No man taketh it from me,
But I lay it down of myself.
I have power to lay it down

I lay down my life
That I might take it again:
And I have power to take it again.

But he that is an hireling
Whose own the sheep are not

Seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep and fleeth.
And the wolf catcheth them
And scattereth the sheep.

The hireling fleeth
Because he is an hireling.

And careth not for the sheep.

VI. I Give Unto Them Eternal Life.

And they shall never perish,
Neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.

My Father which gave them me is greater than all.
And none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

VII. I HAVE OTHER SHEEP.

OTHER SHEEP I HAVE	THEM ALSO I MUST BRING,
Which are not of this fold.	And they shall hear my voice,

AND THERE SHALL BE ONE FLOCK
AND ONE SHEPHERD.

It will be seen that there are here seven distinct divisions of thought.

First, Christ is presented as THE GREAT LEADER OF SOULS.

Second, the PORTER possibly represents the HOLY SPIRIT as the administrator of the Church.

Third, Christ is seen to be also THE WAY OF ENTRANCE TO GOD.

Fourth, He appears as the SOURCE OF ABUNDANT LIFE.

Fifth, THE LIFE IS DEPENDENT ON HIS OWN DEATH.

Sixth, THE LIFE IS A GIFT NEVER RECALLED OR FORFEITED.

Seventh, THERE IS A WIDER PURPOSE OF LOVE. ONE GREAT WORLD-WIDE FLOCK (to be realised at the Second Advent).

It is curious also to trace the parallel lines of thought.

I know my sheep,	And am known of mine.
He calleth his own sheep by name	They *hear* his voice, *know* his voice,
He goeth before them; He leadeth them out.	They follow him.
I give unto them eternal life,	And they shall never perish,
Other sheep I have, not of this fold; etc., etc.	There shall be one *flock*.

Many other teachings of Our Lord are capable of similar analysis, and will, under study, arrange themselves in like orderly manner.

For example, John iii. 11-18. Notice the inversion in the order of Part 2.

	First Part of the Parallel.	*Second Part.*	
The Witness.	Verily, verily, I say unto thee We speak that we do know And testify that we we have seen And ye receive not our witness.	For God so loved the world That He gave *His only-begotten Son* That whosoever believeth in Him Should not perish But have everlasting life.	The Gift of God.
The Believing.	If I have told you earthly things And ye believe not How shall ye believe If I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven But He that came down from heaven Even the *Son of man* Which is in heaven	For God sent not *His Son* into the world To condemn the world But that the world Through Him might be saved.	The Believing.
The Gift of God.	And as Moses lifted up the serpent, etc., Even so must the *Son of man* be lifted up That whosoever believeth in Him Should not perish But have eternal life.	He that believeth on Him Is not condemned, But he that believeth not Is condemned already, Because he hath not believed In the name of the *Son of God.*	The Witness.

The reader will notice here exactly the same *parallel structure* throughout. And the second part *begins* where

the first *ends,* and pursues the *reverse order.* Again, in part first, it is the *Son of Man lifted up by man.* Twice He calls Himself Son of Man. In part second, it is *thrice Son of God,* and it is not *man* who lifts Him up, but God who *sends* and *gives* Him, etc. Again, in part first, believing is made the condition of further knowledge; in part second it is the condition of escape from condemnation, etc.

We have drawn this out and presented it in parallel columns to show that we may by superficial study come to hasty conclusions and do violence to the Word of God. Christ meant to present Himself in two aspects; the Son of Man crucified by man, and the Son of God given and sent by the Father, etc. And hence the whole of this is *our Lord's discourse,* and not as some have carelessly concluded, *John's own addition in part.* May we not here enter a plea for a more thoughtful study of God's Word?

Tradition in Conflict with Inspiration

Mark vii. 5-23.

"CORBAN." This message is of perpetual significance, as to *tradition and its conflict with inspiration.* God's command was "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Exodus xx. 12; xxi. 17), and our Lord's words show that "honouring" includes in God's eyes such respect for their growing infirmities and incapacity for self-support as leads filial love to provide for their old age. And yet the Jewish doctors of the law taught that, if a son should say to his parents, with regard to money or property which might be used for their sustenance, "It is Corban," *i.e.,* an oblation to God—he could thus escape his filial responsibility—an *obligation* literally shortened into an *oblation!* Here a profound principle is laid down by our Lord, that what by the laws of nature, natural affection

and moral obligation, already belongs to parental support, God will not accept for any other so-called pious uses. A deeper principle underlies even this—that we are not at liberty to devote to a special religious use what is already devoted to another purpose by the very principles of conscience and of love. Such an act instead of being pious is impious, a perversion—a sacrilege, not a sacrifice. What is already owed to another by any debt of nature or of society is not ours to use save to discharge that debt, and will not otherwise be accepted by God. Duty comes before benevolence. Restitution and reparation are essentially sin and trespass offerings which always precede the burnt offering.

Our Lord then proceeds to lay down a still broader platform of principles, namely, that to put the commandments or traditional teachings of men on a level with God's requirements is to *render vain our whole worship of Him.* At that very time multitudinous minute ceremonial observances were commanding such attention that the grand moral duties were overlooked; and often the obligation of the latter was virtually annulled in favour of the former—a sinful treatment of the unchangeable law of God. These warnings have not lost their pertinency, for hundreds of our ecclesiastical traditions have no root in God's law, and some of them invade its very domain and nullify worship.

Warnings from History

1 *Corinthians x.* 1-14.

Divinely declared to be a chapter in Hebrew history recounted and recorded for our learning by way of example. In it *five forms of evil doing* are conspicuously held up by way of warning:

1. We should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.

2. Neither be idolators as were some of them.

3. Neither commit fornication as some of them committed.

4. Neither tempt Christ as some of them also tempted.

5. Neither murmur as some of them also murmured.

Plainly the first admonition is directed against the domination of *appetite;* the second against all *idolatry;* the third against all *impurity;* the fourth against *unbelief;* the fifth against *rebellion.*

If there be any sin to which we are prone, not included in this brief category, we do not know what it is. Here all inordinate desire, heart estrangement, preference of lower objects over the divine, distrust of God's promise and disobedience to God's command and will are set before us with their warnings and penalties. It is also to be observed that the first sin of appetite affects mainly *oneself;* the third, of sensuality, involves *others* in our sin, and so represents injury done both to oneself and to others.

It is also worthy of notice that this passage suggests the remedies and antidotes for these five forms of temptations. For we are told in the beginning of the chapter—

1. How the fathers were under the cloud.

2. How they passed through the sea.

3. How they were baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

4. How they did all eat and drink of the same spiritual food.

5. A faithful God will not suffer us to be overwhelmed by temptation which is irresistible, but will provide a way of escape, etc. (ver. 11-13).

If we compare these five encouragements with the five perils, they seem curiously to match each other.

1. The dominion of appetite—Christ our bread and drink.

2. The peril of idolatry. Compare the passage through the sea—a baptism unto Jehovah.

3. The seduction of sensuality. Compare the baptism in the cloud—symbol of Holy Ghost power.

4. The temptation of unbelief. "Is the Lord among us or not?" Compare "under the cloud" of the divine presence.

5. The risk of murmuring and disobedience. Compare with this the assurance that God is always our helper in temptation.

God's Judicial Dealings with His People

1 *Cor. iii.* 13-15.

Is there not a *present* judicial dealing of the Lord with His own people? What is this "day" that shall declare the character of our work? (Comp. iv. 3.)

It is a solemn thought that there is going on a daily individual judgment of God; and that many of His dealings with us are intended as the consuming fire to burn up the wood, hay, and stubble which would otherwise accumulate in our lives. May we not ourselves bring our work day by day and ask Him to search it and show us if there be any wicked way or worthless material in it or in us? Need this mistaken stuff go on accumulating against a final day of judgment, then to overwhelm us with disappointment and disaster? If we should judge ourselves, we should not be judged; but when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord that we should not be condemned with the world (1 Cor. xi. 31, 32). So then every one of us shall give account of himself unto God. This is an individual judgment, not a collective one. (Compare Ephes. vi. 7, 8 and Col. iii. 25).

Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon (1 Cor. iii. 10). This is a present caution about present work. Does it not *imply* also a present discovery and correction of what is wrong?

Verses 18-20 seem to carry out the idea. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise. A man who thinks himself wise will continually build into his work the vain thoughts which are stubble, the wisdom of man which is foolishness with God (chapter ii. 4, 5). Paul distinctly renounced enticing words of man's wisdom as hay, wood, stubble.

Chapter iv. 1-8 conveys a similar thought. The steward seeks to be faithful, and submits his work not to his own judgment or others,' but to the Lord's. In chapter v. is a judgment of the church delivering an offender up to Satan, etc., for the destruction of the flesh, etc. The purging out of the leaven from the feast (6-8).

Chapter vi. 12—lawful things put away because he will not be dominated by what is carnal.

Chapter vii. 7-24. Even in our daily calling—abide with God, so as not to be building in secular elements—greed, ambition, self-interest.

Chapter vii. 31. The fashion of this world passeth away—stage, scenery, paint, and pasteboard.

Chapter viii. 9. Liberty to the flesh which becomes a stumbling block to the weak, etc.

Chapter ix. 15. Paul did not even avail himself of his right to a *support* lest he should hinder the Gospel.

Chap. ix., 25. Temperate in all things. The body kept under control.

Lead Us Not into Temptation; but Deliver Us from Evil

Matthew vi. 13.

This petition in the Lord's Prayer has caused no little controversy. Our Lord says elsewhere, "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." But that God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any

man, is the definite teaching of the Epistle of James. If God leads into temptation, is He not the accomplice of evil? And as that is inconceivable, why are we taught to ask Him not to lead us into temptation? Temptation here involves more than the testing of character by discipline and affliction, as the word is used in James i. 2. The whole context implies that temptation here means *solicitation to evil doing,* nor will it suffice to paraphrase this petition so as to make it read " so lead us that we may not get on temptation's territory or be exposed to overwhelming allurements," which is a common way of evading what seems to be a real difficulty. Is there not a sense in which we can and ought to pray not to be *led into temptation?*

The word of God seems to us to teach in many parts and ways that it is part of the punishment of evil that God subjects sinners to extraordinary exposures. He judicially abandons wilful transgressors to their evil courses, as He hardened the heart of Pharaoh, as He sent an evil spirit to harass Saul, and as He gave Judas over to the peculiar influence of Satan. The last half of the first chapter of Romans three times represents God as *giving over* wilful evil-doers to the sway of evil. May it not be some such judicial abandonment against which we are to pray?

However regarded, this petition sets before us two great thoughts concerning sin:

1. There is a way of *special exposure.*
2. And there may be a *complete deliverance.*

A few ways of avoiding such exposure and securing such deliverance are elsewhere taught us. We mention the following:

1. Habitual *avoidance* of the territory of evil.

There is ground where evil is dominant and where its fascination is peculiarly ensnaring. A prayerful and watchful soul will, at any cost of self-denial, keep away from the devil's territory. Jenny Lind Goldschmidt for-

sook the stage at the height of her success and when money was pouring into her lap like the golden shower of Midas. A friend who found her sitting amid the glories of the dying day with the open Bible on her lap asked her how she could make such a sacrifice? Her simple answer was: "What else could I do when the stage made me think less and less of this (pointing to God's Word), and nothing at all of that?" (pointing to the sunset glories).

2. A life-long *alliance with God* as the enemy of all evil. Jesus Christ was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil; and once for all to commit oneself to Him and enlist under His banner is to make all His foes one's own, and to ally oneself with Him in conflict and conquest.

3. The *expulsive power* of a new and stronger affection. We overcome evil best, not by a simple resistance, but by positive good. Something holy and useful to engross the mind, and displace the attraction of evil, will make the evil become constantly less powerful until we wonder how it ever had such influence over us. Every sin overcome *gives up its strength* to the *victor*, and every sin that overcomes *takes the strength* of the vanquished party to itself. Hence by overcoming, conquest becomes easier and more habitual.

"The Altogether Lovely"

Canticles v. 16.

Mrs. Spurrell, in her superb translation of the Old Testament, renders this, which is the conclusion and summary of the Bride's description of her beloved Bridegroom: "As to *Himself*—the concentration of all loveliness." And Dr. Young renders "All of Him is desirable."

Thus, the central thought is that, in this Divine Being, what is infinitely lovely finds its very essence, and that all there is about Him is to be desired and loved, admired and adored. This provides a Scriptural point of view from which to study the *Divine Perfection of Beauty* (comp. Isa. ix. 6, 7; Phil. iii. 8; 1 Peter ii. 6, 7).

This Loveliness and Desirableness may be seen from at least seven points of view.

1. His Wisdom and Knowledge—incapacity for any mistake of judgment.

2. His Truth—incapacity for either error or unfaithfulness.

3. His Righteousness and Justice—incapacity for anything wrong or unjust.

4. His Holiness—incapacity for any sympathy with sin.

5. His Love and Goodness—incapacity for anything malicious or malevolent.

6. His Grace—which is not an attribute, but a free and voluntary exercise of pity and compassion.

7. His Glory—the sum of all the rest—incapacity for a blot or stain.

Then in all these He is, as in all else, *infinite*. Each perfect, infinitely and immutably perfect.

These seven points might be studied in the light of other Scripture texts which refer to God's Wisdom and Knowledge, Truth and Sincerity, Righteousness and Justice, Holiness and Purity.

Partnership with Unbelievers

"Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers."—*2 Cor. vi.* 14.

This is an unmistakable reference to, and application of, the commands of the Levitical law, the meaning of which

as *symbolic precepts* can be read only in the light of such interpretation.

In Deut. xxii. 10 we read, "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together." The ass was an unclean beast and never used for sacrifice; the ox was clean and the main sacrificial victim, the bullock and red heifer being very conspicuous at the altar. God would not have these two beasts, the ox and the ass, yoked to one plow, the prohibition thereby signifying that the true believer and servant of God should not be closely in partnership, especially in his capacity as God's servant, with an unbeliever and servant of Satan. It is bad for *both*—it degrades God's service to a low level as though a regenerate man could risk such corrupting association; and it deludes the unbeliever by the idea that he can acceptably work for and with God before he turns from sin and becomes a child of God by faith.

Again, in Levit. xix. 19, we read: "Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind. Thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed; neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee." This command as to breeding cattle, etc., reminds us that in the marital relation, whose grand object is to bear and rear offspring for God, there is the closest partnership and the most sacred union for the most sacred ends; and in proportion to the intimacy of the tie and the solemnity of the responsibility, is the necessity for spiritual sympathy. If in an ordinary business, where commercial, social, political, and temporal issues are involved, it behooves us to make sure that those to whom we are linked and with whom we labour are spiritually in sympathy with us, so that we can work harmoniously and to the glory of God—infinitely more where the household life is involved, which is the true foundation both of the Church and State, and where the issues are spiritual and eternal—issues of character, condition, and destiny. But this injunction goes further. It forbids mixing seeds in

sowing, or material in garments. Taking the three prohibitions together, they seem to hint: 1. Separation unto God in marriage. 2. In service. 3. In personal habits.

"The Wisdom That is from Above"

James iii. 17, 18.

"First pure (innocent of harm, blameless); then peaceable (peace-loving and peace-making); gentle (or open to reason, reasonable) and easy to be entreated (as opposed to headstrong, wilful, obstinate); full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy; and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

Here is compressed into twenty-eight words in the original Greek the whole scheme of a life guided by the dictates of celestial wisdom. It has *five* marked characteristics:

1. The basis of all is *purity*. "First, pure" (note the striking similarity of those words).

Our first aim is to be innocent of harm, lamb-like, harmless, and blameless in character and life.

2. Then *peaceable*, gentle, and easy to be entreated. Here the dominant idea is peace—peace-loving, peace-keeping, peace-making. When the basis is laid in purity, we are prepared for peaceful relations with God and man. We shall cultivate pacific tempers and qualities, and seek to promote peace among men. Hence we shall be reasonable in our requirements and open to reason, ready to be convinced and persuaded, and not wilfully perverse and obstinate; humble and docile, not proud and stubborn.

3. Then comes a true *fruitfulness*—a life abounding in mercy and compassion, full of all good fruits in deeds and words of kindness and love—an unselfish life of service.

4. And withal there will be a *spirit of impartiality in love* and absolute sincerity in speech and conduct.

5. And so the believer becomes a *sower of both righteousness and peace.* He who began by cultivating in his own soul such germs of purity and peace ends by sowing them in the soil of society, and becomes God's husbandman for an eternal harvest.

If we look closer we see here a manifest Divine *order* also, and a peculiar *inclusiveness* of teaching.

First of all, there is the man in his *inmost, essential being,* and in that which constitutes the inmost and most essential quality of a godlike character—*purity of heart,* which alone can insure purity and righteousness of life. This is first in order and importance, the foundation of all the rest.

Next, we have the man *in his outward relations;* he is a man of *peace.* He is at peace with God and with man. He may be compelled to contend for purity in others as he first of all cultivates it in himself, but even when he contends he is not contentious. And, beyond the conflict necessary to establish purity, he never makes war. And here the Spirit of God so beautifully reminds us what it is that makes even disciples violators of the peace. The *cause* may be righteous, while the *spirit* is unreasonably stubborn and selfishly wilful. Many an otherwise good man confounds controversy and conscience, and makes a heroic stand, not for what is a matter of principle, but of preference. There is no bigotry more intolerant than the bigotry of prejudice. Or, again, how often a disciple of Christ, having determined on a given course, blindly persists in it, however contrary to others' judgment or even well-being. Families and churches have been recklessly torn asunder by mere stubbornness and wilfulness. How beautiful the meek and quiet spirit which gives way whenever there is no moral issue involved.

Next we have a hint of the positive triumph of *a godlike temper.* Back of even the will lies the disposition which inspires the determination. *Love* must be the dominating force. Love is *merciful,* even in its judgments

of others; Love is impartial; it knows no caste spirit, and makes no discriminations of an unjust character. Its ministries are universal, and its compassions world-wide. It has no resentment, but is kind even to the unthankful and the vindictive. And as love reigns in a true disciple, so does *Truth*. There is no hypocrisy, but transparency and genuineness in act and in motive.

Such a life is, of necessity, *a life of harvesting*. It is a life that reproduces itself in others. To it the world is a field, and the truth of God and the very life of His children are the seed of a new and eternal harvest.

Seven Witnesses to God

THERE are seven distinct channels through which God may be known; some may have been closed to multitudes of the world's inhabitants, while others are universal and open in their testimony; condemnation follows if their voice is not regarded.

These seven witnesses to God are:

1. Creation—Rom. i. 19-25; Acts xvii. 24, 27; 1 Cor. viii. 6; Col. i. 16.
2. Tradition—2 Thess. ii. 15; Acts xvii. 28, 29.
3. Nature—1 Cor. xi. 14; Rom. ii. 14.
4. Conscience—Rom. ii. 15.
5. True Philosophy—Rom. ii. 1-5.
6. The Law given to Israel—Rom. ii. 17, 29; iii. 1, 2.
7. The Gospel of Christ Jesus the Lord—Rom. ii. 16; James ii. 12.

Sin: Its Nature and Effects

SEVEN conspicuous passages on sin hint its nature.

1. 1 John iii. 4: "Sin is the transgression of the law"—lawlessness.

2. 1 John v. 17: "All unrighteousness is sin."
3. James i. 15: "Lust . . . bringeth forth sin."
4. James iv. 17: "To him that knoweth . . . and doeth not." Omission of duty.
5. Rom. xiv. 23: "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Doubtful indulgence.
6. John xvi. 9: "Sin, because they believe not on me." Unbelief.
7. 1 John v. 16: "A sin unto death." Comp. Matt. xii. 31, 32; Heb. x. 26, 27.

The comprehensiveness of these seven passages grows on us. All represent forms of solemn and awful *trifling,* more or less terrible, both in nature and result:

1. Trifling with the *will* and *authority* of God—His right in us.
2. Trifling with *conscience*—the moral sense.
3. Trifling with *lust* and *passion*—innate depravity.
4. Trifling with *conviction*—dulling the intellectual *sense* (Rom. i. 18-22).
5. Trifling with *sensibility,* delicate sense of spiritual things.
6. Trifling with *destiny, grace,* and *love* of God in Christ.
7. Trifling with the *Holy Spirit*—the last gift of God.

Moral Meaning of Christ's Miracles

Manifestly they have a twofold significance: first one of *attestation,* and secondly of *illustration.*

First of attestation of Christ as the Messiah-prophet. He spoke with such words as man never spake, and these demanded, as their complement and correlative, works such as man never wrought. This was the current expectation of the people. As they saw his miracles, they said among themselves, "When the Christ cometh will

he do more miracles than these?" (John vii. 31). And Nicodemus said with confidence: "We know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." Our Lord Himself seems to have referred to these miracles as the signs whereby the Father had sealed Him and His ministry.

But the second and far greater purpose of His miracles was to demonstrate and to illustrate *His power over all spiritual ailments.* This is directly taught in Mark ii. 10: "But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins. . . . I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house." A little further on in the same chapter He expressly likens sin to sickness and says: "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." He thus declares Himself the soul-physician who came to call men to repentance, and so remedy by this bitter medicine their spiritual maladies.

So looked at, His miracles acquire a new beauty and deep meaning. We can understand now His *economy* of miracles—not performing them needlessly, simply to exhibit power or satisfy the clamour for a sign, but giving forth His supernatural power only when the purpose justified it. Hence also His miracles were miracles of *love* and not simply of *might.* All of them were wrought for a benevolent end. They were to heal and help, comfort and bless. We see also why they were so *varied* in character. There are about twenty-four distinct classes of them, and they cover every sort of bodily ailment—blindness, deafness, dumbness, leprosy, palsy, fever, impotence, deformity, infirmity, withered and maimed members, demon-possession and raising the dead. This variety shows that His power extends to equally varied needs of the spiritual man. All these ailments are plainly typical, and their beautiful fitness to set forth spiritual sickness and deformity is at once apparent.

For example, blindness—how exact the correspondence with the mind, veiled by prejudice, naturally incapable of discerning spiritual truth, or voluntarily closed, lest the light should flash conviction upon the soul. Deafness—what a type of the disobedient spirit that turns away from God's teaching and becomes dull and callous to His invitations and warnings. Dumbness—how appropriate to express the loss of the power or the will to bear testimony for God, to speak in His name. Leprosy was to the Jew the walking parable of sin and judgment—the type of the hopeless uncleanness which no self-effort could remove, and which already bore upon it the curse of God and of separation from all that is pure and holy. Palsy is the natural expression of lost power—impotence. The nerves of sensation or motion, or both, no longer respond to the behest of the will, and the man can not walk, or perhaps move. Fever—how well that speaks of that heat of passion, or lust, or anger, that is in the blood, and must run its course unless the touch of Christ gives healing. Infirmity and deformity, a maimed body, and especially a dead body, suggest at once exact correspondence to the evils and awful destruction wrought in us by sin. There is no form of sin, or of the suffering and disaster consequent upon it, which may not find its close counterpart in some of the physical ailments which Our Lord so marvellously healed.

Christ's miracles, moreover, suggest the *character of his cure*. His healing was by a word, or by a touch, or both; and it was marked by three great characteristics: immediateness, completeness, and permanence. "Straightway" is Mark's great word. No sooner was the healing sentence spoken than immediately the result was apparent. He spake and it was done, even though at a distance, as in the case of the son of a nobleman of Capernaum (John iv.). Those whom he healed were at once made perfectly whole, and there seems to be but *one* exception, where a second touch was needful to per-

fect the cure (Mark viii. 24, 25). He could say to the evil spirit, "Come out of him and *enter no more into him*"—making the cure perpetual.

Another lesson is taught by these miracles: the *conditions in man* which are necessary to the healing power of Christ; and here again these seem to be threefold; first *confidence,* second *obedience,* and third *testimony.*

1. A measure of the confidence of faith seems to have been generally, if not uniformly, a condition of cure. Unbelief limited, if it did not make impossible, the help and healing. "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" Faith seems to be the *receptive* side of miracle working, without which the *impartive* side is valueless; just as the light of the body is the eye, because that organ makes light available. As to him who has no eye it is as though there were no light, so to him who has no faith it is as though there were no power.

2. Obedience is equally essential—in fact, the obedience of faith is faith's natural expression. On this pivot everything turns. We are to *do the impossible* at His command. He says to the palsied man, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk." That is just what he cannot do. How can he who cannot move, rise and take up and carry what takes up and carries him, and at once acquire the lost art of walking? The answer is that Christ's *commandment is an enablement.* We are not to take counsel of our fears or failures or self-helplessness. It must be our assurance that because He commands we can perform; and the strength comes when the faith obeys, and continues while the eye is upon Him, as Peter found when he walked on the water to go to Jesus; so long as his eye was upon the Master he did what the Master did.

3. Testimony seems to be associated with continued blessing. "Go home and tell thy friends." "Go, show thyself to the priests," and, above all, "glorify God." There is a witness to be borne by every saved and sanctified soul, to God first of all in praise, and to man, next,

in testimony to saving power. And, in many cases, blessings fail of permanence, and men relapse into sin, if not collapse into apostasy, because unfaithful in testimony.

Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday and to-day and for ever." The change is not in Him, but in us. If His power is restrained it is because we restrain it. We do not believe, trust, expect, and hence we do not receive. Let us ask in faith nothing wavering, for the double-minded and unstable soul has no reason to think he shall receive anything of the Lord. His faithlessness insults God and makes large blessings impossible. But it may be safely affirmed that what, on Scriptural grounds, we ask and expect God to do in us and for us never fails. Even if our faith goes unwittingly beyond His promise, and ventures to ask and expect what we are not warranted in asking and expecting, God often goes beyond His promise, so that the faith exercised in Him, even though it be mistaken in its supposed warrant, may not fail of reward. It yet remains for God to show what great things He can do for a believer who *fully believes,* implicitly *trusts,* and unfalteringly *obeys.*

Key Texts on Faith

Faith should be studied in the light of the progressive and successive lessons taught in Scripture.

The word *believe* is first found in Gen. xv. 6, when it is said, literally, that "Abram *amened Jehovah,* and it was imputed unto him for righteousness."

The verb *"amen"* means more than *let it be so—it shall be so.* Abram simply responded to Jehovah's word, "it shall be as the Lord hath spoken." Hence James adds, "and he was called the friend of God," for it is a sign of friendship that another's word be confirmed by us when affirmed by him.

This first lesson on faith is followed by a second, twelve

hundred years after (Hab. ii. 4), "The just shall live by his faith."

The importance of these will appear when we consider that these two passages of Scripture are each *thrice* repeated in the New Testament, and when they occur they mark critical points in the argument and are key-notes of the epistles.

Gen. xv. 6 is repeated in Rom. iv. 3, Gal. iii. 6, James ii. 23.

Hab. ii. 4 is repeated in Rom. i. 17, Gal. iii. 11, Heb. x. 38.

For twelve hundred years God was teaching His people that first lesson before He gave them the other. The word faith is found but once, before it is found in Habakkuk (Deut. xxxii. 20), "Children in whom is no faith," where it means *faithfulness, i.e.,* they neither have faith in Me nor keep faith with Me.

The word "believe" seldom occurs with relation to God in all this interval. Isa. xxviii. 16 is one exception: "He that believeth shall not make haste." Another is in Dan. vi. 23: "No manner of hurt was found on him, because he believed in His God."

If, however, those two main passages, from Genesis and Habakkuk, be followed in the New Testament, it will be seen that they are at the critical points of the argument in every case, and by the emphasising of one word the peculiar relation to the particular context will appear. Thus, in Rom. iv. 3, it is the word *counted;* in Gal. iii. 6 it is the word *believed,* and in James ii. 23 it is *righteousness.* Again, in quoting Habakkuk, in Rom. i. 17, the emphatic word is *just,* as though answering the question, Who is the just or righteous man? In Galatians the emphatic word is *faith,* as though the question were, How does the just live? And in Heb. x. 38 the emphatic word is *live,* as though the question were, What is it that the just does by his faith? He lives, *i.e.,* he is both *made* alive and *kept* alive by faith.

It is, then, most essential to trace the meaning of believe or faith. The English word believe means primarily to be *willing* and faith is from *fido,* I trust, both conveying the notion of a voluntary and restful confidence in another's word.

The simple, literal meaning of the word, amen, as originally used, *it shall be so,* gives much light on the subject. In several conspicuous instances of faith this *very form* of words is used, as also in rebukes of unbelief. A few examples suffice:—

In Luke i. 20, twice we find the *shall be* which is in such contrast to Zacharias's doubting frame, and in connection with which unbelief is seen to be an instant paralysis of testimony. And in verses 37 and 45 we have the two statements that "with God nothing shall be impossible," and that she shall be blessed "that believed that there shall be a performance of those things which were told her of the Lord." (Margin.)

Acts xxvii. 25: Paul says to the shipwrecked company, "I believe God, that *it shall be* even as it was told me," as though Gen. xv. 6 were in mind (comp. 2 Cor. i. 20).

Between these two lessons in Luke i. and Acts xxvii. lie all the sixty years of Gospel history, one incident being before the birth of John the Baptist and the other after Christ's ascension and within a short time of the destruction of Jerusalem. Innumerable are the lessons in the interval, all emphasising what the angel taught Zacharias and the Spirit taught Mary in the first chapter of Luke. We are to say *"It shall be" to all promises of God,* and act as though we believed.

Take one example of *restfulness* in such faith (John iv. 46-54). The man believed the word of Jesus and went his way, so restful that he appears not to have gone home until the next day. Also, as an example of *power* from faith, Mark xi. 22-24. Verse 22 might be rendered, *"Reckon on God's good faith."* In such faith lies the power of a *fiat;* it shall be—as in the very word faith we

have the letters of the word *fiat* (comp. Matt. xvii. 20; Luke xvii. 6).

Two other lessons in the Old Testament cluster about the word *trust* (Psalm ix. 10; Isa. xxvi. 3, 4), which word is close of kin to the word believe.

Final Rewards and Punishments

THERE are only seven distinct views as to the final destiny of mankind, which are, or ever have been held, and under one or other of these every view may be classed. Between them, therefore, we must must all take our choice.

1. *Materialism.* This makes man, in common with all animals, simply organised matter. Thought and feeling are nothing but the play of blind forces, like electricity acting on the brain cells as its battery. Hence death is simply cessation of life, and the absolute destruction of the human personality.

2. *Annihilation.* This goes a step further and affirms that ultimately, if not at death, continued, conscious existence shall cease, except with those to whom eternal life is given through faith in Christ. What becomes of the life represented by the unsaved man is not determined, some believing that it is merged into universal life as a drop disappears and loses identity in the ocean.

3. *Universalism.* This asserts the final salvation of all the race, basing it upon the benevolence of God, or on the obedience and suffering of Christ as man's Representative, or both. Some maintain that since God is the universal Father, His love will not suffer any to perish; others that Christ literally died for all and hence all will be saved. *Restitution* is a modified form of this doctrine, holding the ultimate salvation of men after a period of retributive suffering.

4. *Eternal Hope.* This simply extends the period of

possible repentance and consequent salvation into the next life. It views God's mercy and man's free agency as not limited by this our mortal life, but insists that whenever and wherever repentance and faith are found rescue will follow. Those who advocate *a second probation* fall under this class.

5. *Eonian* punishment. This is a modified form of the preceding; it accepts all the above positions, except that it leaves the duration of the punishment of sin indefinite. Those who advocate this view affirm that the word translated eternal means literally *age-long,* and therefore denotes an indefinite period only. As to what shall take place afterward this theory does not affirm.

6. *Agnosticism.* This position may be mentioned, as being akin to the last, only going beyond it. Its theory is that of the future state we know nothing, and that it is impossible we should because our ability to understand even descriptive language is limited by the experience of what is described; and that, as this whole subject is wholly outside of our present domain of experience, it is wholly inconceivable and unthinkable, and must remain a mystery until the curtain is lifted from it by actual entrance into the after-death state.

7. *Eternal Damnation* holds that the "probation" of man ends with his human life, and that character and consequent condition remain unchangeable; that there is neither a posthumous opportunity for repentance and faith nor an ultimate sovereign restoration of man to holiness and the favour of God; and that, though there will be various degrees of suffering and penalty, the lost will continue in eternal sin and suffering.

After all hypothetical and sceptical attempts to substitute something else for the obvious teaching of Scripture, evangelical believers are constrained to hold fast this last position as the only one consistent with the

uniform testimony of the Word of God. And, whatever mystery may envelope the subject, we fall back upon the great question of Abraham, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Carey's Text

"Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;

"For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited."—*Isaiah liv. 2, 3.*

This is an example of thoughts that breathe and words that burn; as also of words that shake the world. How prominent these words, prophetically and historically!

(1) *Prophetically.* Chap. liii. is central. A lone sufferer in travail of soul, a servant of servants. The body of believers is regarded as a *wife*—barren, unfaithful, rejected, and desolate, but restored, becoming fruitful, etc. The story of Ruth the Moabitess is a beautiful allegory. The former outcast becomes the wife of Boaz, and in the ancestral line of the Messiah. This "*bursting forth* on right hand and left" means enlargement; hence, a *crisis of growth,* the demand outrunning supply. Hence the text, *enlarge, expand, lengthen, strengthen.*

(2) *Historically.* Linked with William Carey, the great motto of modern missions being suggested by his sermon on this text in 1792. Its great word is *enlarge,* and it unfolds the way of enlargement. Four things have to do with expansion—area, canopy, cords, and stakes, *i.e.,* the territory, the church, organisation, and consecration. Lengthen and strengthen them suggest extensity and intensity.

I.—*Attempt, expect* great things, said Carey. A world-

wide plan and effort, sustained by individual co-operation and consecration—this is the grand lesson. Two very necessary elements are emphatic:

1. Acceptance of a world-wide commission—settled as beyond dispute. Charity may *begin* at home, but does not stay there as selfishness does. Love seeks out the most distant and destitute.

2. Attempt to extend the Church till its bounds are co-extensive with the world, no nation, people, or human creature being left unprovided for.

II.—Individual co-operation. The power of cords depends on stakes; one weak stake imperils the whole tent; it gives way and makes the strain on the rest greater than they can bear. Every church must hold the rope. Every child of God must do his duty. He must:

1. Cultivate intelligent interest.
2. Take a personal part in the work.
3. Give consecrated substance.
4. Offer unceasing prayer.

Two commands here are designed for encouragement:

Fear not. A rebuke to the timidity of unbelief; a challenge to faith and courage.

Grudge not. A rebuke of selfishness and a challenge to large and liberal giving of self and substance.

The first reminds us that it is God's work. Ours—because first God's—and we are workers together with Him. The second reminds us that *self* must be sunk out of sight, in order to glorify Him.

Take the matter of *gifts:*

1. Consider the amount of unused wealth.
2. The superfluities that might be given up.
3. The indulgences that might be foregone.

The sublimity of *giving* when it is the expression of a consecrated life has never yet been measured.

The Things of Christ

Four times in our Lord's farewell address He referred to the peculiar function and office of the Holy Spirit as a revealer of truth concerning Himself. John xiv. 26; xv. 26; xvi. 13-15. He is respectively represented as testifying, revealing, and glorifying. "He shall take of mine and show it unto you." What are the things of Christ which He thus shows unto the believer? Mainly these twelve which need to be studied carefully in connection with the passages where they mainly occur, and there seems to be an order in the revelation of them.

1. Matthew xi. 28-30: The *rest* of Christ—salvation.

2. Matthew xxviii. 20: The *presence* of Christ—service.

3. John xiv. 27: The *peace* of Christ—comfort in trial.

4. Romans viii. 9: The *Spirit* of Christ—secret of adoption.

5. Galatians ii. 20: The *life* of Christ—vital secret.

6. Galatians vi. 2: The *law* of Christ—self sacrifice.

7. 2 Corinthians v. 14: The *love* of Christ—highest motive.

8. 2 Corinthians xii. 9: The *power* of Christ—strength in weakness.

9. Philippians ii. 5: The *mind* of Christ—entire inner disposition.

10. Philippians iii. 8: The *knowledge* of Christ—or fulness of fellowship.

11. Colossians iii. 6: The *word* of Christ—secret of all knowledge and wisdom.

12. 2 Thessalonians ii. 1: The *coming* of Christ—final recompense of reward.

Within these twelve "things of Christ" all the horizon of redemption is included. And to know these things is

salvation, sanctification, service; fellowship in sacrifice and joy, participation of the divine nature and eternal reward. There are many other things of Christ which the Spirit shows the believer, which should be included in any larger study of the theme, such as the *name* of Christ, the *gospel* of Christ, the *faith* of Christ, the *body* of Christ, the *judgment seat* of Christ, the *Cross* of Christ, the *stature* of Christ, the *savour* of Christ, the *meekness and gentleness* of Christ, etc. The totality of Christ would be found to be the one all-inclusive theme of the New Testament.

The Original Glory of Man

Psalm viii. (*Comp. Genesis i. 26; ii. 7.*)

Genesis, the Book of Beginnings, gives us the origin of man. Last stage of creation: "Let us make man." Consultation in the Godhead; importance of the work. Formation of a creature, to be God's representative; to be clothed with authority and rule as the visible head and monarch of the world.

Mark the story of his creation: "Out of the dust of earth." Science shows the substance of flesh, sinews, bones, and blood to be the same as elements of soil on the surface and limestone in the heart of earth. Crystals and cells are identical.

God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives." Life—animal—intellectual—moral—spiritual: man, a complex being. Hence Eccles. xii. 7; John xx. 22.

"So God made man in His own image," etc. What is this image? Eccles. vii. 29: "Upright." This is said only of *man;* more than mere erectness of form is meant.

1. This image includes:

Individuality. Psalm viii.: "A little lower," etc., *i.e.,* one grade lower than angels. There is here a deeper meaning than at first appears.

In lower forms of creation we have, as Godet says, *species without individuality;* in man, species *with* individuality; in angels individuality *without* species. God is above all, uncreated and alone.

Man has an individual character. God deals with him as an individual—"*every one* of us," etc.

II.—*Intellectuality.* Whatever mental processes the animals are capable of we call instinctive, because they seem:

1. Developed from the beginning, and not dependent on education.

2. Incapable of advance beyond certain limits, while man has *capacity* for boundless *improvement;* there is no limit to his growth; and he has a capacity for *intellectual creation, i.e.,* origination and invention. Compare fox and hole, bird and nest, beaver and dam, the same from age to age.

III.—*Royalty* of nature. "To have dominion"—a king, to "replenish and *subdue* the earth." Note in man:

1. Marvellous power of *will.* Independent choice on moral grounds.

2. Capacity to control and subdue. Exemplified both in the animal creation and over elements. Job xxxviii.: "Canst thou send lightnings?" Man tames and subdues all things.

IV.—*Morality,* including:

1. Conscience. "Moral *sense*" finely so-called. The power of discrimination as to right or wrong. He *sees* and *feels* moral quality in action. Note the grandeur of conscience. "Assizes" in the soul. Man, a whole court in himself with all the requisites, judge, jury, witnesses, executive; capable even of "weighing God" morally.

2. Capacity for fellowship with God. Reception of highest truth. See as to "original righteousness" Eccles. vii. 29. His spiritual being is the "observatory" of the soul, looking out on sublime prospects.

Practical remarks—hence:

1. Disaster of the fall—image of God defaced, but not effaced. Broken mirror—every fragment a mirror, capable of reflection.

2. Philosophy of redemption. The restoration of image. "Second Man," "Last Adam," the type of redeemed man.

3. Remnants of unfallen condition are yet found in man's better impulses, conscience, etc. Man is somewhat like Samson blinded, and grinding in the mill, yet a giant still.

4. Difficulty of transgression. The way of transgressors is hard—not altogether easy to sin; we stumble against our moral instincts.

5. Completeness in God alone. He only can fill unsatisfied longings of soul. Eccles. xii. 13, "For this is the *whole of man.*" "Thou, O God, hast made us for thee" (Augustine). "Birds hatched in a *strange bird's nest* return to their own mother when they hear her call."

The Marriage Feast

Matt. xxii. 1-14; *Luke xiv.* 16-24.

Only as these parables are combined do we get the complete truth they are meant to present—the full presentation both of the *historical development* of the plan of salvation and of the various *spiritual attitudes* taken toward it by men.

I.—*Historically* there are manifestly three periods:

1. Prophetic announcement, as represented by the first invitation.

2. The second epoch of complete preparation followed by the acts of violence.

3. The extension of invitation to the hitherto uninvited Gentiles.

II.—So, taken together, there are *three attitudes* of men toward the Gospel.

1. The attitude of *hostility*—treating God's heralds with hatred.

2. The attitude of *frivolity*—excusing attendance on frivolous pretexts.

3. The attitude of *indignity*—neglecting proper preparation of attire.

All the treatment of the Gospel may be embraced under one of these three.

The keynote of both parables may be found in Matthew xxii. 14: "Many are called, but few chosen." The calling is single—it is wholly God's—a sovereign invitation. The choice is double and mutual: God's choice of us and our choice of Him—neither ever goes alone. Election is mutual, combining His election of us and ours of Him. Taken from this higher point, embracing both parables, the view is most instructive and inspiring.

Comparative Study in Hebrews

It is sometimes profitable to collate and compare the contents of a particular book. For example, take the *warnings* found in the Epistle to the Hebrews—first those which are *negative,* referring to some *lack;* and then those which are *positive,* referring to some actual and positive form of sin.

I.—*The Negative Warnings.*

1. "Lest at any time we should *let them slip*" (ii. 1). Careless hearing. Comp. "hold fast" (x. 23).

2. "If we *neglect* so great salvation" (ii. 3). Neglect of salvation.

3. "Lest any of you should *come short* of it" (iv. 1). Coming short of rest.

4. The word "not being *mixed with faith* in them that heard it" (iv. 2). Faithless hearing.

5. "Seeing ye are *dull of hearing*" (v. 11). Dull spiritual senses.

6. "Be *not slothful,*" etc. (vi. 12). Slothful habits.

7. "*Not forsaking* the assembling of yourselves together" (x. 25). Non-churchgoing.

8. "Which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned" (xi. 29). Venturing without faith.

9. "Ye have *forgotten* the exhortation" (xii. 5; xiii. 7, 16). Forgetfulness.

10. "Lest any man *fail* of the grace of God" (xii. 15). Risk of unwatchfulness.

II.—*Positive Warnings:*

1. "Consider the apostle and high priest" (iii. 1; xii. 3). Careful consideration.

2. "Harden not your hearts" (iii. 3, 18). Avoid hardening.

3. "Impossible . . . if they shall fall away to renew them again" (vi. 6). Risk of apostasy. Comp. "Cast not away your confidence" (x. 35).

4. "That which beareth thorns and briers is rejected" (vi. 8). Unholy living.

5. "He that despiseth Moses' law, etc." (x. 28). Reckless disobedience.

6. "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin," etc. (xii. 14). Running patiently.

7. "Follow . . . holiness, without which no man," etc. (xii. 14). Following holiness.

8. "Lest there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau" (xii. 16). Bartering privilege.

9. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh" (xii. 25). Refusing to hear God's voice. Comp. xii. 9.

10. "Our God is a consuming fire" (xii. 29; x. 31). Coming unto judgment.

Incentives to a Life of Holiness

Ten presented in Romans v.-viii.

1. The new standing in grace (v. 1). Being justified by faith.

2. The new sphere of grace (v. 10). Kept safe in His life.

3. The new state in grace (vi. 1, 2). Dead to sin, alive to God.

4. The new master in grace (vi. 14). Dominion of sin vs. Christ (vii. 1-10). A new husband; marital authority.

5. The new law of the Spirit (vii. 2). Law, meaning tendency.

6. The new "mind of the Spirit" (viii. 8, 9). Mode of operation.

7. The new element of the Spirit (viii. 10). In the Spirit and the Spirit in us.

8. The new tuition of the Spirit (viii. 14). Led, taught, disciplined.

9. The new harmony of God (viii. 28). Even through suffering.

10. The new will of God (viii. 30). Entering into His purpose.

Each of these implies an *opposite and previous experience.*

1. The old standing—guilt and condemnation and alienation.

2. The old sphere—out of Christ and in "the lap" of Satan.

3. The old state—dead *in* sin.

4. The old master—sin, a tyrant.

5. The old law—sin and death.

6. The old mind—carnal mind.

7. The old element—"the flesh."

8. The old tuition—led and taught of the world.
9. The old system—out of harmony with God.
10. The old will—of man.

A Study of Psalm ciii.

This is the most conspicuous of all the expressions of praise in the Word of God, and bears closest study, not only for the comprehensiveness of its praise, but for the grandeur of its conceptions of God, and the adorable attributes which evoke thankfulness.

The keynote is struck in the two opening verses; then follows a sort of enumeration of the "benefits." In the sixth verse the character of God is presented, that which in *Himself* challenges adoring gratitude. Then from verse 19 to the close is a concluding appeal to all intelligent beings and even inanimate nature to unite in blessing Him.

The central portion deserves especial examination.

It opens with *five grand benefits.* Forgiveness, reaching to all iniquities; healing, reaching to all diseases; redemption of life from the abyss of destruction; coronation with daily kindness; and satisfaction with daily goodness, so that there is a perpetual renewal of youth. These, rightly interpreted, cover all conceivable forms of good, for the central benefit is obviously spiritual and not merely physical.

Then come the *five attributes* in God which demand most thankful recognition. First, His righteousness in judgment; then His mercy and grace; then especially His infinite love; then His fatherly pity; and finally His covenant faithfulness.

This part of the psalm is not surpassed in the entire

Word of God for magnificence of tribute to Jehovah. There runs through it one golden thread of recognition of infinite benevolence which qualifies all the rest and gives it essential perfection. Even His righteousness and judgment have a benevolent aspect, for they are the vindication and defence of the *oppressed.* Retribution to evil doers is protection to those whom they wrong and ruin. Divine wrath towards injustice and robbery of the poor is love toward those who suffer under it. Vengeance is not to be confounded with revenge; one is judicial and governmental, the other is personal and diabolical.

When the Psalmist directly approaches God's dealing with human sin, as sin is found, not in the persistently ungodly but in the penitent transgressor, he can find no one point of view to satisfy him. He is like an observer studying some magnificent natural scenery or artistic structure; he walks about and surveys it from every side; from one aspect the Lord is merciful, from another gracious, from another slow to anger, forbearing or long-suffering, and from another plenteous in mercy, and from yet another ready to relinquish even His holy indignation—a God whose righteous wrath is quickly appeased.

From this point the devout singer advances to the very heart of his theme, lost in the love of God; and, like Paul in Ephesians iii., studies the science of Divine mensuration. Trigonometry is the science of three dimensions: height, breadth, and length. And here we have the trigonometry of love. For height it is as that of heaven above earth; for breadth as the stretch of east and west; for length as eternity to eternity. Manifestly, the writer is dealing with infinities, for it is impossible to measure these. However far we mount upward there is space beyond. We cannot go so far east or west that in the same directions greater distances do not remain; and so eternity has no limits, is without

beginning or end. Even so God's love defies measurement and passes knowledge.

Yet this infinite God is a tender and pitiful *Father*. And note the exquisite proof of this. He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are but dust. The word "frame" is used only here. It means the manner of our formation or construction. He knows the way we are made, put together, as the builder knows the frame of a house, where the weak points are. God knows all about us. To return to the image of a father, God knows each of His children and remembers the peculiar infirmity or liability of each, and pitifully adjusts all that is required of them to the peculiar temperament and weakness of each.

Then the final thought is that this love, mercy, grace, long-suffering, pity, reach beyond parents to their children and grandchildren, as He said to Abraham: "I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee for an everlasting covenant." The rewards of obedience extend to the believer's offspring and remote descendants. The stream of love flows on and on, and only eternity can show how the God of the covenant remembers His own.

As we examine closely it looks as though there were some correspondence between the *five benefits* enumerated (3-5) and the *five attributes* thus surveyed (6-18). Let us place them opposite each other for comparison:

Forgiveness towards transgressors.	Righteous judgment toward oppressors.
Healing for physical diseases	Mercy toward spiritual diseases.
Redemption of life.	Love in redemption.
Loving kindness and tenderness.	Fatherly pity and compassion.
Renewal of youth.	Perpetuity of covenant.

Thus regarded the Psalm unfolds a marvellous beauty and symmetry of structure. Those who have seen the

numerical structure pervading the Word of God will not be surprised to find *five* the dominant number here; for five is four and one united—the number of universal man and the sovereign God, made one in redemption.

Well may the Psalmist close by reminding us that from His throne in heaven this *sovereign God rules over all.* And now follows a four-fold challenge to the angels and all His hosts, to the ministers or servants who execute His pleasure, to all His works in all places, and to the Psalmist's own soul, just as the Psalm opens with a four-fold challenge to bless God and not forget His benefits.

Huckstering

"For not are we as the many, huckstering the Word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, in the very sight of God, in Christ we speak."—*2 Cor. ii. 17.*

THIS passage suggests briefly:—

1. Harmony with one's message.
2. Harmony with one's self.
3. Harmony with one's Master.

"*Huckstering*" has a definite meaning. It was customary for hucksters, or retailers of commodities, to increase both the bulk of their goods and their own profits by adulteration with some inferior article. We may confine the illustration to food.

There were four objects in view: (1) to increase the bulk; (2) to enlarge the profit or gains; (3) to cater to the taste of the buyer; (4) to get advantage of competitors.

There were also four effects: (1) to depreciate value

and nutritive qualities; (2) to degrade the business or trade; (3) to deceive the customer; but, above all (4) to corrupt the honesty of the *seller* himself.

All these apply to him who hucksters the *word of God.* He does it from poverty of material. Instead of reverently studying the Word of God until he unfolds its riches to himself, he mixes it with foreign material until he destroys its purity. Oftentimes he does it for personal gain and to cater to the perverted taste of the hearer, and get advantage of his competitor in the pulpit. And the effects are equally deplorable, for he lowers, if he does not destroy, the nutritive value of the spiritual food he retails. He degrades his high vocation, he deceives the hearer, and not only dishonours his Lord, but he degrades himself.

The word "sincerity" is equally unique; it literally means a being able to bear the searching exposure of intense light, and indicates a moral and spiritual and even intellectual state, in which it is possible to bear searching investigation—"truth in the inward parts"—absolute *genuineness.*

The third thought is that of perfect harmony with God. Three expression are used: *from* God, *before* God, *in* Christ. As though a man came to the people *from* the presence of God, yet was never *out* of that presence, and was always insphered *in* the Christ of whom he speaks.

The Bishop of Durham tells of a Cambridge clergyman who was wont to preach to comparatively empty seats, but whom the same students who seldom attended his church would with one consent have sought to have at their bedside if they were dying. Men detect spuriousness and genuineness in the long run, and are drawn to the man who does not adulterate the Word, but is manifestly sincere and speaks as in the Master's presence.

Perversion of the Lord's Supper

1 *Cor. xi.* 30.

Calvin calls attention to Popery's horrid profanation of the Lord's Supper and the sacrilegious abominations set up in its room:

1. Prostituted to filthy lucre and merchandise.
2. Maimed by taking away the cup from the laity.
3. Changed into another aspect by the custom of partaking separately, *communion* thus being done away with.
4. No explanation given of its meaning, but a mumbling that would accord better with a magical incantation or the detestable sacrifices of the Gentiles.
5. Association with an endless number of ceremonies, partly trivial and partly superstitious, and therefore polluting.
6. The diabolical invention of sacrifice, which contains an impious blasphemy on the death of Christ.
7. Fitness to intoxicate miserable men with carnal confidence, while they present it to God as if it were an expiation, and think to drive off everything hurtful by this charm, and that, too, without faith and repentance.
8. An idol is there adored in the place of Christ.

In short, it is filled with all kinds of abominations.

Mixed with Faith

"Not mixed with faith."—*Hebrews iv.* 2.

We feel not so sure of the improvement in the Revised Version over the accepted version in the phrase in Hebrews iv.: "Not being mixed with faith in them that

heard." Certainly the fact is that the Word heard does not profit if it be unmixed with faith.

1. There must be faith in the Word as having divine authority, as applicable universally, and inspired infallibly; otherwise the message will be powerless.

2. There must be faith in the messenger, his sincerity and genuineness and unselfishness: otherwise his message will suffer.

3. There must be faith in the Christ who is the burden of the message, thus supplying that vital bound of union without which all preaching is ineffective.

The Works of the Flesh

Galatians v. 19-22.

THESE seem to be subject to classification:

1. The flesh, in its *sensuality,* the form of unholy appetites, mastering the man: adultery, fornication, uncleanness. lasciviousness, drunkenness.

2. The flesh in its *idolatry,* rebelling against the supremacy of God: idolatry and witchcraft.

3. The flesh in its *enmity,* antagonising the well-being and peace of others: hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, envyings, murders, revellings.

4. The flesh in its *heresy,* antagonising the truth and the unity of the Body of Christ; sedition, heresies, etc.

The Believer's History

COL. i. 9-14, 21, 22: Here we have the believer's *past, present, and future.*

1. The *judicial.* "Hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints of light." "Hath deliv-

ered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son." "In whom we have redemption through His blood—the forgiveness of sins."

2. The *actual.* "We cease not to pray for you . . . that ye *might be filled with* the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God." "Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness."

3. The *ideal.* "And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death—*to present you holy and unblamable and unreprovable* in his sight."

Here are deliverance, translation, and redemption—all at a glance, past, present, and future.

Terror and Love

2 Corinthians v. 10-14.

Here within the compass of a few verses is one of the sharpest contrasts found in Scripture. It reminds one of places in the Alps where in a moment one passes a frowning crag of rock—that reaches far above and seems to overhang with threatening ruin—while at his feet is a chasm thousands of feet deep; then a few steps—perhaps a turn in the road—a broad and fertile valley, full of suggestions of peace and plenty and bathed in sunlight.

The Bible is full of these contrasts. Let us look at this contrast more closely. It suggests:

I.—*Two Aspects of God's Character.* The terror of the Lord, the love of Christ. Sinai stands for one, Calvary and Zion for the other. (Comp. Hebrews xii. 18-29.)

These are contrasts, but not contradictions. Both love and wrath are inherent in, and essential to, the character of God; in fact both are manifestations of the same attribute of holiness and love, as a magnetic needle by the same law attracts at one end and repels at the other. The love of holiness and the hatred of sin are not only equally natural to God, but could not exist without each other, and are equally perfect.

Law must have *sanctions* of reward and penalty, which are the pillars of God's throne; and to take away either would be to destroy its foundations. Consequently the text suggests:

II.—*Two sides of our experience.* If we know God truly we shall know both His terror and His love. And the holiest men have been the men who have most clearly seen both sides of God's character. The saintly Fletcher asked God to show him all the corruptions of his own heart—and his own "comeliness was turned into corruption," as with Daniel, so that he asked the Lord to withdraw His light for he could endure no more. Then he asked that he might with equal clearness see His grace, and the vision was even more overpowering, so that again he cried to God to stay His hand.

We cannot appreciate the beauty of holiness unless we understand the enormity and deformity of sin; nor the value of Christ's sacrifice without the vision of guilt and penalty.

The text also suggests:

III.—*Two motives for holy living.* No man can think of the great white throne and the judgment seat of Christ without feeling as Webster did, that "no greater thought ever occupied his mind than that of accountability to

God." God is terrible as the Avenger of all evil doing. Says Lowell:

"Careless seems the great Avenger."

The final judgment will be the righting of the wrongs of the ages.

Paul kept that judgment of God always in his mind's eye (1 Cor. iv. 1-4). He knew that he could not escape the judgment of men, whether friends or foes, nor the judgment of himself at the bar of his own conscience. But the true way to live is to elevate before the mind's eye the final court and tribunal of God, in imagination, and continually confront oneself with it. Look at everything in the light of it. Project every proposed course forward into the light of the day of God, and see how it looks in that light. "Study to show thyself approved of God." The only way to live for oneself or others is to keep the day of account in view.

Note the correspondence of these twin motives:

1. The terror of the Lord to sinners. The death of Christ for sinners, and the consequent death of the believer to all terrors of judgment.

2. The judgment seat to the believer with reward and glory of all his self-sacrifice shared with Christ.

IV.—*Two motives for service to souls.* This thought is here very prominent; knowing the terror of the Lord, we *persuade men.* The love of Christ constraineth us—that we should not henceforth *live unto ourselves.* The terror of the Lord is inseparable from the judgment seat, which suggests human accountability to God, as does also the great white throne.

Paul looked at the terror of the Lord, and that led him to *persuade* men not to offend against God, but to repent and turn from sin. Then he looked to the cross of Calvary, and that constrained him to *beseech* men to be reconciled to God.

He saw on the one hand a throne of judgment with its

awful retribution of unrepented sin, and he saw on the other the cross as a vicarious sacrifice completely providing for deliverance from judgment. Compare John the Baptist proclaiming two great foundation truths, a judgment at hand and the Lamb of God taking away sin before the approach of judgment. Paul persuades men to be ready against that day, and constrains them to be *ready* by being *reconciled*. The Cross and throne are thus counterparts to each other. He turns from the one to the other, and thus seeks to turn men from one to the other.

More than this, the example of such self-sacrifice moves and constrains him to live not to himself, but unto Christ and for the souls He died to save.

Hence there is in the Cross a lesson both to the saint and to the sinner: to the sinner to be reconciled to God; to the saint to be a reconciler, being saved, to seek to save others.

These motives to holy living and holy serving are not wholly reserved for future recompense. There is a law of spiritual requital that is even now in operation. Compare Ephesians vi. 8; Col. iii. 25. These two passages of Scripture teach us the present and perpetual operation of this law or principle. No man can debauch another's conscience, allure another by temptation, ensnare another into lying, impurity, or any other form of sin without in so doing lowering his whole moral tone—weakening his own power of resistance to sin.

And, on the other hand, no one can help another's conscience, strengthen conviction, resolution, or right affection, without in so doing getting new strength for holy living. Every man receives now and here the partial recompense of his right or error.

What, then, is the use of future reward and retribution? The present, being partial and incomplete, only anticipates, forecasts, and foretastes the final and full compensation of sin and holiness.

There is something better even than all external reward—it is the inward satisfaction of being Christ-like. Even heaven itself could not be heaven without heavenly-mindedness.

Authority of Ministers of Christ

"Rebuke with all authority."—*Titus ii.* 15.

1. The authority of the *Word,* or the Divine message.
2. The authority of the *office,* or the Divine mission.
3. The authority of the *Church,* or the Divine assembly —"communis consensus." There is a certain value in tradition—what has been agreed on by spiritual minds for centuries. (Luke i. 1.)
4. The authority of *experience,* or the Divine Life.
5. The authority of the *Spirit,* or the Divine Teacher.
6. The authority of *reason and conscience,* or the Divine instinct—reason being the faculty that discriminates truth from error, and conscience the faculty that discriminates right from wrong; the intellectual and moral senses, ordinarily accurate but not infallible, and needing illumination.
7. The authority of LOVE, or the Divine disposition (comp. 1 Thess. ii. 7, 8).

When this sevenfold authority is combined, nothing can be more Christlike. The Word imparts the voice of infallible truth; the office, the official sanction; the Church, the approval of custom and common consent; experience lends the force of the life, experimental value; the Holy Spirit gives unction; reason and conscience supply an appeal to the rational and moral sense; and love bathes all else with tenderness and gentleness and winning power.

The Woman with the Issue of Blood

Comp. *Matt. ix.* 20-22; *Mark v.* 25-34; *Luke viii.* 43-48.

Lessons taught:

1. Sin, a disease incurable by any human agency or remedy.

2. Hence all self-effort results in vanity, vexation, ends in despair.

3. Just where man comes to the end of self he finds the beginning of God (Prodigal, Luke xv.). Man's extremity, God's opportunity.

4. Condition of healing. Voluntary appropriation of power in God. Virtue, not in faith, but in Christ. Specific act—laying hold of promise of God (Num. xv. 38, 39). Blue Ribbon—Zazith.

5. Cure, immediate, complete, permanent, and often conscious.

6. Confession should follow, as duty, privilege, both honouring Christ and benefiting men. Her act had no precedent, but set one and *became* such (Matt. xiv. 36).

7. Further blessing follows, when full duty done (Rom. x. 8, 9). Confession and salvation. Note "*daughter,*" the word used to her by Christ after confession.

Men's physicians are:

1. Self-reformation. Human resolve.

2. New environment. Association. The best environment did not save even Adam or Judas!

3. Education. Changes *field* and *form* of sin, but not the root.

4. Ritualism. Priestly absolution, etc.

5. Intoxication. Gaiety, pleasure.

6. Comparison with others for self-justification.

7. Infidelity. Wreck of faith.

The "touch"—not historic, scholastic, esthetic, ethic, or ecclesiastic, but experimental.

Stages of Growth

"First the blade, then the ear; after that the full grown corn in the ear."—*Mark iv.* 28.

PARABLE peculiar to Mark. Four distinct stages of growth: the seed and blade pertain to period of *germination;* the ear and ripe kernel to that of *propagation.*

The "Kingdom" has its period of planting and sprouting; but this is only preparatory to the more important period of propagation. It must take root downward before it can bear fruit upward (2 Kings xix. 30). But we must not overlook either stage or their mutual relation.

I.—Preparation. This includes:—
1. Sowing of the seed.
2. Springing of the blade.

II.—Propagation. This also is two-fold:—
1. Forming of the ear.
2. Ripening of the grain.

The Divine Life must first be implanted and then take root and grow. This is the period of the root and shoot. But growth is in order to fruit. As the process begins with seed sowing, it ends with seed reaping.

God's *Life* ripens into *Love,* which is the principle of self-giving. The corn of wheat falls into the ground and dies to itself to live again in the crop. In the great work of men's salvation, two conditions help to mature the crop: first, knowledge of human need, and second, love for human souls, leading together to prayer, witness, and self-denial.

Thus the whole history of the progress of the Kingdom is here outlined in fifteen words. God's life must be ours; it must grow downward and upward, taking root in us and bearing fruit for Him. Whatever helps to make it more truly our vital possession, and to secure its more rapid and systematic reproduction and dispersion, is of the highest value as securing its grand end.

Humiliation and Exaltation

Philippians ii. 5-11.

THIS is one of the central passages of the New Testament, or pivotal paragraphs, around which all revealed truth about Our Lord Christ revolves. If carefully examined, especially in the original, it will be found to contain eighty-five words, almost, if not exactly, *divided into two equal parts.* Taking the nine Greek words that introduce the passage, translated, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," we have left in the Greek seventy-six words. If we again separate the first three or four of the second half, "*wherefore, God also,*" which are introductory to this section, we have just thirty-six words which describe Christ's *humiliation,* and thirty-six more which describe His *exaltation.* There is thus a designed correspondence in these two sections, which extends even to the number of words in each. To see this it may be helpful to arrange the two halves in parallel columns, thus:—

LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU WHICH WAS ALSO IN CHRIST.	WHEREFORE, GOD ALSO
WHO, being in the form of God,	
(1) Thought it not something to be violently held on to that He was equal with God	(1) Hath super-exalted Him.
(2) But emptied Himself.	(2) Given Him a name.
(3) Took on him the form of a servant.	(3) Above every name.
(4) Was made in the likeness of men.	(4) That every knee shall bow.
(5) And became obedient	(5) Of things in heaven, earth, and the under-world.
(6) Unto death.	(6) And every tongue confess him Lord.
(7) Even the death of the cross.	(7) To the glory of God, the Father.

In arranging thus it will also be seen that there are *seven steps* downward in Christ's voluntary humiliation, and as many upward in His Divine exaltation.

Thou Shalt Not Lust

Exodus xx. 17.

This is the literal meaning of the word *covet.*

Lust is a word which means:—

1. Irregular desire—a longing, natural, and normal originally, but which is perverted and debased. The Divine laws and limits have been disregarded and transgressed. It is unrestrained and unsatisfying. It becomes supreme instead of subordinate to the higher faculties, sensual and selfish, and hence also tyrannical and transforming the man into the likeness of the idol he worships.

2. It leads to practical atheism, and makes men idolators because they make inferior good their God.

3. It makes us indifferent to the rights of others.

4. Self-retributive power resides in lust, as seen in:—

(*a*) Power of habit: "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden in the cords of his own sins";

(*b*) Reckless trifling with health, and even life;

(*c*) Fixedness of character and so of condition;

(*d*) Everlasting sin.

The Promises and Their Purpose

"He hath given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."—2 *Peter i.* 4.

A parallel passage is 2 Cor. vii. 1. Both Peter and Paul give the negative and the positive aspects of the subject. "Become partakers of the Divine nature," is the positive; "having escaped the corruption," etc., is the negative.

"Let us cleanse ourselves" is the negative; "perfecting holiness" is the positive.

I.—A promise is a *prophecy,* but always of goodness and mercy, while prophecy is often of judgment. It is not unconditional; but it never fails to those in whom the conditions are fulfilled. It is addressed to the individual as well as to the collective body.

"*Precious*" is one of the key words to these Epistles. It occurs seven times. In 1 Peter i. 7 precious *trial of faith.* In i. 19, the precious *blood.* In ii. 4, a living *stone,* chosen of God and precious. In ii. 6, a corner stone, elect, precious. In ii. 7, unto you which believe, he is the *Precious One,* or Preciousness. When the Lord is spoken of, the substantive is used. In 2 Peter i. 1, precious *faith.* In verse 4, precious *promises.*

The promises are "exceeding great," as well as "precious"—great in *multitude* and in *magnitude.* There are thousands in the Psalms alone, and probably ten thousand in the whole Bible, every inspired precept or prayer being an indirect promise.

Their magnitude covers every possible emergency of sinner or saint, from the first conviction of sin to final and perfected salvation.

Each letter to the seven Churches in Rev. ii., iii. closes with a characteristic promise, and in chronological order, to him that overcometh: to eat of the tree of life, not to be hurt of the second death, to eat of the hidden manna, to have power over the nations, to be clothed in white raiment, to be a pillar in the temple of God, to sit with Christ on His throne. We are reminded of (1) Eden; (2) the Fall; (3) the manna; (4) Moses' prevailing prayer in the war with Amalek; (5) his intercession with God and God's reply; (6) Jachin and Boaz the pillars of Solomon's temple; (7) Solomon on his own throne, as before he had sat on the throne of his father, David. Thus these promises to the Seven Churches suggest the entire experience of the believer from conversion to glory.

Astronomy is the science of the immeasurable. God uses the heavens as illustrations of immeasurable grace—in Isa. lv. 9, one dimension—height; in Psa. ciii. three—height, length, and breadth; in Eph. iii. 18, 19, all four—breadth, length, depth, and height. Consider the breadth of God's promises, reaching to all. Their length, from eternity to eternity. Their depth—to the utmost of sin and need. Their height—"As the heaven is high above the earth."

God also uses universal terms—whosoever, whereso-ever, whensoever, whatsoever, all, any, every—"All" is collectively universal, "any" and "every," distributively universal. The meaning of all this is that the exceeding great and precious promises are to be enjoyed by all be-lievers to the full.

II.—The purpose of God in these precious promises is "that we may become partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

The tenth commandment is "Thou shalt not lust." (Rom. vii. 7.) This word covers far more than coveting —every unholy desire. There is a temptation in our fallen nature to overstep the limits which God has set. As long as we keep within them, we are pleased and satisfied. When we overstep them desires become ungovernable, sensual, tyrannical. Reason and conscience are in the dust. God is dishonoured and degraded, and virtually trampled under foot. So, when we believe in God and worship Him, we receive His nature into our being. It is the implanting of a new principle of life.

Faith is the *surrender* which makes it possible to *take the impress* of God's mind—as the ironworker fashions the iron with the hammer, or as the potter moulds the clay, or the sculptor the marble, bringing out the angel as it was in his own mind. God makes the yielded soul partake of the Divine nature, His dominating thought, affection, purpose, becoming our own.

The greatest promise ever made was, perhaps, this: That the Father, Son, and Spirit will make their abode with the loving and obedient soul. John xiv. 23. The dominating characteristic of God the Father is holiness; of the Son, self-sacrifice; of the Spirit, love. If the Father, Son, and Spirit make Their abode in us, the characteristics of the Triune God—holiness, self-sacrifice, and love—will appear in us. But all promises centre in the Precious One. "For all the promises of God in Him are Yea, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God by us."

The Old Man and the New Man

THE contrast between these forms one of the most suggestive and instructive of all Scripture themes. Compare the following passages:—Rom. vi. 5-14, 2 Cor. v. 17, Gal. v. 15, Eph. iv. 22-24, Coloss. iii. 5-14.

Taking all these together we find the old and new man consistently treated as each a *personality*, having the attributes and accessories of a person. This may be best seen by placing them in contrast.

I. *The Old Man*—or man of old—used always of the former unregenerate self. Rom. vi. 6, Colos. iii. 5-14.

The old man is incapable of self-transformation.

II. His *Members*. Col. iii. 5. Five mentioned. Rom. vi. 13. Instruments of unrighteousness, etc. These are the natural and carnal powers and faculties, used in sin, correspondent to human limbs, whereby we walk, work, and war.

The new man, a new creation—created in righteousness, etc.
(Eph. iv. 24; Col. iii. 10; Gal. v. 15.)
The new man impossible by self-effort.

The corresponding members of the new man are the spiritual powers and faculties whereby we discern truth, love God, and walk with, and work and war for Him.
(Comp. Heb. v. 14.)

III. His *Clothing.* What was once worn as a garment, now to be "put off." Habits are like clothes which take the shape of wearer. The old clothes fit and befit the old man.	The new man demands wholly new attire. (Col. iii. 12). Love, the girdle holding all the rest together. (Eph. vi. 10-17.)
IV. His *Walk.* Col. iii. 7. The whole course of life. A walk implies a starting point, a path, and a goal. This begins in rebellion, and pursues self-will and ends in perdition.	Rom. xii.; 1 Thess. v. 16-23; 1 Pet. iv. 3, 4; Col. ii. 6. The new man walks with God, in Christ, by the Spirit. He starts at the Cross, and goes onward and upward to the goal and crown. (Prov. iv. 18.)
V. His *Standing,* or judicial position, Col. ii. 6. Under Holy Wrath of God. Necessarily condemned, and under judgment. Conscience foreshadows final judgment. (Rom. ii. 15, 16.)	Accepted in the Beloved. (Eph. i. 6; Rom. v. 1.) Justified. Observe force of word, "Stand." (Psa. xl. 1, 2.) Out of mire and on rock. This is "not a legal fiction, but a divine anticipation."
VI. His *State,* or actual condition. Described as "Corrupt" (Eph. iv. 22). Children of Disobedience Dead in trespasses and sins. Incapable of good. (Eph. ii. 1, 2; 2 Col. ii. 13.)	Alive unto God. (Col. iii. 1-3.) A State of Righteousness and true holiness. Sanctification, completeness. (Col. ii. 10.)
VII. His *Master,* Sin and Satan. (Rom. vi. 16; Eph. ii. 1, 2.) Only two possible spiritual Lords, either Christ or Devil.	One Master, Christ, by the Spirit, controlling spirit, soul, and body.
In old man the state precedes the standing and is the reason for it.	In the new man the standing is first by grace and the state is conformed to it.

1. Note, difference between *Law* and *Grace.*

2. Note, that the new man as a creation of God can never come of reformation but only of Regeneration.

3. Note, the new attire, like the new nature, is of God, like Christ's resurrection robes, which seem to have been miraculously given, and which "vanished" like Himself, and were not of earthly material.

4. Note, even to the new man part of the old man's attire may sometimes cling, and as we detect it we must put it away as not only unbecoming, but dangerous like an infected garment.

Filling up What is Lacking

"Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for His Body's sake, which is the Church."—*Coloss. i.* 24. (Comp. *2 Cor. i.* 5.)

In this text there seems to be some deep unfathomable meaning to be understood only by special spiritual illumination. Five aspects of the truth are here stated.

I.—There is a Lack to be *filled up* by the believer.

II.—It is a Lack of affliction and *suffering*.

III.—It is a Lack of the Afflictions *of Christ* in our flesh.

IV.—It needs to be filled *for His Body's Sake*—the Church.

V.—To fill that lack by suffering is a *Privilege*—a Joy.

In other words, there is a deficiency to be met; it can be met only by affliction and suffering; these sufferings identify us with Christ, and with His universal Church; and to share them is a consummate ground of rejoicing.

What is the *nature* of this lack? It cannot be a lack in atoning work, of which Christ Himself said "It is finished"; and if anything were lacking at the cross, it was made complete at the sepulchre in the power of His resurrection. (Rom. iv. 25.)

The lack must therefore concern the *application* of Redemption. What Our Lord did and suffered for man must be *made known* to man to be effectual. He is to be brought into saving contact with sinning and suffering humanity. The Head has need of the feet for locomotion, and of the hands for active work. Christ need not have been dependent on us, but when He became the Head of this Mystic Body, He chose to be, as such, dependent on the co-operation of the members. There is a sort of *community* and *continuity* of vicarious suffering, in order to the application of Redemption. It cost Him the agony of crucifixion, and all the Passion of which it was the climax, to *supply* Redemption. We cannot, without cost of suffering, *apply* Redemption to men. The human heart is alien from God. Even when Christ is made known, more sinners are ready to tread under foot the blood of the Covenant than to take refuge under it. He is despised and rejected of men in His messengers as in His own proper person. We must be prepared for this, and be prepared to find, here and there amid a gainsaying world, one inquirer like Nicodemus, or the woman at the well, or one penitent publican like Zaccheus.

The Place of Safety

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."—*Psalm xci.* 1.

No exposition has ever yet unlocked the mystery of this sacred lyric. Here is promised absolute immunity from all forms of disaster. It takes a very tortuous exegesis to escape the plain teaching here found, however it may be interpreted—whether of physical security, or of spiritual safety, expressed under strong figurative forms.

The idea of such *immunity from evil* pervades the

whole Psalm. The Almighty is represented as a brooding mother bird, covering her nest and fledglings with outspread wings, protecting them from the fowler's snare and the archer's arrow; as a refuge and fortress, a habitation in which one may hide, and whose walls are proof even against the noisome pestilence of the night, and the wasting destroyer of the day; as arming the believer with a shield and buckler, so that the darts and spears that lay low ten thousand at his right hand come not nigh him. To make more emphatic these assurances of safety, other promises are added. Surely He shall deliver thee; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. He shall give His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder. I will deliver him, set him on high, honour him, answer him when he calls, be with him in trouble, satisfy him, etc. Surely such repeated and varied promises must mean something. They embrace:

1. Security, either from bodily or spiritual disaster, or both.

2. Satisfaction in God, combined with length of days.

3. Victory over foes as mighty and malignant as disease, death, and the devil, for there are several terms that manifestly express *disease*—pestilence, plague, terror, destruction; others seem to refer to death by violence, and there are others which appear to refer to Satan, such as fowler, lion, adder, dragon.

This suggests a vital question: What and where is this secret place of the Most High, and what is it to dwell there?

An equally vital matter is to observe the leading *conditions* of such immunity, three of which are conspicuously joined to that word "Because" (verses 9, 14).

1. He hath KNOWN MY NAME.
2. He hath SET HIS LOVE UPON ME.
3. He hath MADE THE LORD HIS REFUGE.
4. He hath PUT IN THE LORD HIS TRUST.

Who has ever sounded the depths of these four simple sayings?

The first implies an intimate knowledge of the nature and character of God.

The second, a fixed heart, affections supremely set upon Him as the Altogether Lovely.

The third, a definite choice of the will, turning from all else to take God as the habitation of the soul. Not only a refuge in danger, but an *abiding* place.

And the last, the entire abandonment of the whole being to God as the infinitely faithful and true.

Here is God, the centre of the intellectual convictions, the heart's affections, and the will's supreme choice—all uniting in a habit of trust. May it not be that, if such conditions were fully met, such immunity might be ours?

The basis of all the rest is to *know the name* of the Lord. This Psalm suggests God's Protective Power, His Truth, His Love, and His Faithfulness. It reminds us of four names by which He has made Himself known: The Almighty, the True God, the Faithful God, and Love. To know Him as thus combining infinite power, truth, and love naturally draws out love and trust, and leads us to take refuge in Him. Love evokes love, power leads to taking refuge in Him, and truth begets trust. Thus the whole concealed argument of the Psalm compels one conclusion: I will abide in Him.

Message for Troubled Souls

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God: believe also in Me."—*John xiv.* 1.

By comparing verses 1 and 27 it will be seen that this whole passage forms a complete section, beginning and ending with the same words, and within its compass are contained *the great antidotes to all human trouble;* and these appear to be four: Faith in God, Faith in Christ,

Faith in the hereafter, and Faith in the Holy Comforter. It is better to render the verb, believe, in both cases as an imperative, the Greek form being identical. Various perplexing problems cause us trouble, mentally and morally:

I.—*The Problems of the Universe:* Creation and Providence. "Believe in God." Whence did the universe come? There have been many answers, Atheism, Pantheism, Materialism, etc. Only one answer meets the case, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The problem of creation includes many others. The universe is governed by Law, but law demands a lawgiver. It is full of marks of design, but design proves a designer. It bears the impress of mind and shows a thinker. Matter cannot overcome its own inertia: Who set it in motion? It cannot originate Life, Intelligence, Conscience; and even were evolution proven, here are great gaps in development, each of which calls for a Divine Hand.

II.—*The Mystery of Providence.* The world is somehow morally wrong and needs a moral governor. We observe that Right does not rule. Evil has the upper hand. Might triumphs over right. Look at the poverty, misery, slavery of the multitude and the arrogance of evildoers. (Comp. Psalms lxxiii., xciv., etc.) The only solution to these problems is faith in God as Moral Governor, who will ultimately, as Judge, rectify all wrongs.

III.—Problems of *Sin and Salvation.* "Believe also in *Me.*" Men are everywhere conscious of guilt and need of pardon. Every heathen altar and offering is a witness to this, and in Christ alone these questions find answer. God has laid help on One who is able to save. Sin is expiated by blood, and salvation offered to faith as a free gift.

IV.—Problems of *Death and the Hereafter.* "In my Father's House," etc. The Father's House is the uni-

verse. (Heb. iii. 4.) It has many abodes: some here and some beyond. But the believer is never out from under his Father's "Roof," and Death is only passing from the lower to the higher apartments. There is no cessation of life or loss of personality.

V.—Problems of *Present Spiritual Need.* To these the answer is the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The saved soul, looking forward to a final heavenly home, is now in the world, and burdened with a sinful self. What shall we do between the entrance upon the path of piety and the final entrance into glory? We need a present power to overcome sin and enable us for service and suffering. The indwelling Spirit meets this need, and both brings the absent Christ and the distant glory near.

God's Standard of Power

"According to the days of thine Exodus out of the Land of Egypt, will I show unto him (new) marvels."—*Micah vii.* 15.

The miracles of the Exodus are the Old Testament standard of Jehovah's Power to deliver his people. This standard is referred to probably not less than three hundred times in the Old Testament. (Comp. Micah vi. 4, etc.)

That remarkable deliverance included many marvels:

1. A marvel of Grace—in passing over the blood-stained houses.

2. A marvel of Power—in making a path through the Red Sea.

3. A marvel of Judgment—in overwhelming the pursuing Egyptians.

4. A marvel of Guidance—in supplying the pillar of cloud and fire for leadership.

5. A marvel of Goodness—in providing bread in the wilderness, etc.

6. A marvel of Condescension—in pitching His tabernacle among their tents.

7. A marvel of Patience—in enduring for so long their murmurings and rebellions.

8. A miracle of Faithfulness—in being mindful of His covenant.

From the eighteenth to twentieth verses some of these marvels are obviously referred to:—

The passing over the blood, 18.

The overwhelming of the Egyptians, 19.

The patient faithfulness of a covenant God, 20.

A careful comparison of all the instances in which the marvels of the Exodus are cited would reveal an astonishing body of admonitions and encouragements. But it is especially interesting to note the New Testament Standard of Power: Ephesians i. 19-23, "According to the working of His mighty power, which he wrought in Christ," etc.

Here may be traced quite as many marvels, singularly correspondent, but on a grander scale:—

1. The passing over of the blood-sprinkled believer.
2. Opening up a path of life through death and the grave.
3. Destroying the power of the believer's foes.
4. Bestowing the Holy Spirit for guidance.
5. Providing for every daily need of his pilgrims.
6. Indwelling in the church and in the believer.
7. Bearing with all the faults and follies of this people.
8. Unchangeable fidelity to the covenant of grace.

The Last Commission

We here combine the various words of Our Lord on this one subject to show the comprehensiveness and progress of thought.

THE MAKING OF A SERMON

I.

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying "PEACE BE UNTO YOU." And when He had so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again "PEACE BE UNTO YOU."

II.

All Power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. As my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.

III.

Then opened He their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them: Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.

IV.

Go ye therefore into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. Go, make disciples of all nations; Baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

V.

And, behold I send promise of my Father upon you.

Depart ye not from Jerusalem,
But wait for the promise of the Father,
Which ye have heard of me,
Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem,
Until ye be endued with power from on high.

For John truly baptised with water, but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me

Both in Jerusalem and all Judea,
And in Samaria,
And unto the uttermost parts of the earth.
And He breathed on them
And saith unto them,
Receive ye the Holy Ghost.

VI.

AND LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY,

EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE AGE.

And these signs shall follow them that believe
In My name shall they cast out demons;
They shall speak with new tongues;
They shall take up serpents;
And if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them;
They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.

VII.

And He led them out as far as to Bethany;
So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them,
He lifted up His hands and blessed them;
And it came to pass while He blessed them,
He was parted from them;
And, while they beheld, He was taken up,
And a cloud received Him out of their sight;
And He was carried up and received up into heaven.

And they worshipped Him,
And returned to Jerusalem with great joy,
And were continually in the temple
Praising and blessing God.

And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with and confirming the word with signs following. AMEN!

We add now some examples of the same truths, as seen *twofold* from *Old* and *New* Testament points of view.

Spiritual Requital I.

"The Lord God of recompenses will surely requite."—*Jerem. li.* 56.

This is a very conspicuous text. It gives God a name nowhere else found in Scripture: "The Lord God of recompenses"—an aspect of the Divine Nature, at once sublimely awful and gloriously complete. It is very obvious that *in this world* the scales of justice do not hang evenly. In fact, not only Job and Asaph, but many more modern saints have stumbled at the prosperity of the wicked. Certainly among men, might is too often the only right; brute force often sways instead of brain force, or better still, the force of conscience and of love. Wrong often seems to crucify righteousness and mount the throne, while virtue mounts the scaffold.

There is one, the Lord God of recompenses, who will surely requite. Only He is patient, because He is eternal. His working out of just judgments is not confined to this age or worldly sphere. As life stretches beyond this visible horizon, so does recompense. He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness. That judgment day will be the righting of the wrongs of the ages. Then the wickedness unpunished here will be visited with merited retribution; and the virtue and piety unrewarded here will be honoured and recompensed.

He who thus looks toward the final recompense will feel that it is necessary to vindicate God's impartiality, righteousness, and justice, and will rejoice in such vindication. Truth and error, virtue and vice, justice and injustice, right and wrong, are all to find their fitting place in God's eternal plan. For a time God "winks at" human sin, forbearing with evildoers, and permitting

wrong to apparently triumph. But he laughs at the boasts of the wicked, for He seeth that His day is coming. And the righteous is bidden to rejoice also, and lift up his head; for the day of retribution to the evil-doer is the day of redemption to all true saints. He who cometh bringeth His reward with Him, to give every man according as his work shall be.

Spiritual Requital II.

"Whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord."—*Ephes. vi.* 8.

This is the law of *spiritual requital.**

This is a principle of divine administration, true both in the natural and supernatural spheres.

The perfection of Judgment lies in this, that nothing good or evil is overlooked, however small. Nothing is small. All human sin turned on one wrong choice. Retribution is poetically exact; both reward and punishment come in the line of the service or the wrong done.

The thought in this promise is most encouraging. There is no good thing done by us which does not bring to us the same blessing from the Lord which we have done to or conferred on men. Whoever convinces another of sin gets a quickened sense of his own sin; whoever strengthens faith in others finds his own faith confirmed; whoever instructs ignorance comes to a higher knowledge and intelligence; whoever helps a weak conscience enlightens his own moral sense. To relieve suffering is to assuage one's own grief; to bring comfort is to receive the Lord's own comfort; to bear a burden for others, means the increase of strength to bear

* Comp. Coloss. iii. 25.

our own. And so in doing wrong. No man can debauch another's conscience, inflict an injury, consent to a fraud, play on human weakness—without losing capacity for those virtues which he weakens, and getting more the slave of the vices that he encourages. Jacob the supplanter got supplanted; Haman's malice returned on his own head.

Godliness is great gain, even having the promise of the world that now is. He that is friendly has friends; he that generously gives generously gets; he who loves is loved; and who judges charitably is charitably judged. He who serves others will find others serving him; he who is willing to die for others will find others willing to die for him. "The Lord is a God of recompenses and by Him actions are weighed" in an unerring balance. He never overlooks even the smallest service rendered to Him or His saints, nor the smallest act of hostility and injury.

The Secrets of Power I.

"I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord."—*Micah iii.* 8.

THERE are three great words which together embrace all holy living: *Salvation, Sanctification, Service.* And three others words which respectively pertain to these three: *Faith, Separation, Power.*

This power is given for service. Disciples are appointed to witness, and all true efficient testimony depends on the Power of the Spirit. We cannot convince by our logic, but he can by his demonstration; we cannot make men tremble by our threatenings, but he can shake them with his convictions. We cannot give life to the dead, but he can make men to be born again.

We see the effect of this power in Peter, who on the day of Pentecost so spake that three thousand souls were saved. Peter, who shrank before a maid and denied Christ, now bold before rulers to denounce their crucifixion of Christ Jesus and defy them to do their worst toward his followers and witnesses.

From the day of Micah to this, the anointing of the Spirit has been the one secret of prevailing power with men. John Wesley by it turned the tide of formalism and secularism, and developed a new state in the church at large. George Whitefield, by the same power, held thirty thousand people on one occasion spellbound before the Gospel. This power was the secret of Charles H. Spurgeon's forty years of ministry in the metropolis of the world, filling the great tabernacle, with its capacity for five thousand auditors, by the simple attraction of the Gospel—without even choir or organ. By the same power Dwight L. Moody also awakened souls in two continents.

Ye who would serve God, rest not without this power. Without it work for God is failure and defeat. Christ promised that we should receive this power, and bade His disciples *tarry until* they were so endued. One day of witness and work after this enduement and endowment is worth more than years of work before it is received. A new motor is introduced into the character and life when the Holy Spirit is thus bestowed in holy unction. Power becomes immeasurably increased when we have been endued with the very spirit of Power Himself.

The Secrets of Power II.

"If ye have faith . . . ye shall say unto this mountain be thou removed."—*Mark xi 22-24.* Comp. *Matt. xvii. 20.*

FAITH has not only supplicating privilege, but commanding power. Coleridge says:

> "Faith is an affirmation and an act,
> That bids eternal truth be fact."

Faith has the authority and power of a *fiat.* What is a *fiat?* God said, "Be Light!" and Light was—and He says to us:

"Concerning the work of My hands, *command* ye Me."

In nature are universal forces, such as light and heat, gravity, magnetism, and electricity. They work within certain laws, or modes of operation, which we have only to understand and act accordingly, and we command them to do our bidding! OBEY THE LAW OF THE POWER AND THE POWER OBEYS YOU.

Obey the laws of light and it becomes our artist, delineating with matchless accuracy and beauty a beloved face or a natural landscape; obey the laws of heat and it becomes our assayer, refining metals and making them ready to take any shape at our will. Obey the laws of gravity and it becomes our mechanic, with Titanic hammer beating the rocks to powder and moulding stubborn material for useful ends. Obey the laws of magnetism and it becomes our pilot over unknown seas, or a valuable therapeutic to restore health to diseased frames; obey the laws of electricity and it becomes our messenger, motor, illuminator.

In the spiritual realm there is one all-subduing, all-controlling force or energy: God's Holy Spirit. God gives His Holy Spirit to them that obey Him,* and we

* *Acts v. 32.*

have only to regard those laws within which the Spirit acts, and His power is at our disposal; so that in the work of God's hands, we may actually command His Spirit.

Faith issues its sublime decree, its holy fiat, 'Let this be!'
Commands the deeply rooted tree, be plucked up, planted in the sea.
Or bids the mountain to depart, believing, doubting not in heart,
That what faith willeth shall be done; because faith's will with God's is one
By mystic union with his Son. Concerning work of God's own hand
He bids us his own power command; prayer asks, not only, but decrees;
Knows no impossibilities.

The Unveiled Eye I.

"Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."—*Psalm cxix.* 18.

HERE again an inspired prayer is an indirect promise. The word "open" literally is *unveil,* and God here assures the praying soul that in answer to prayer He will unveil the eye to see otherwise hidden things in the Scriptures.

The word mystery is used in the Word of God, not of a truth which is inscrutable and inexplicable, into which it is irreverent or impertinent to intrude, but of a truth hidden to the veiled eye of the natural mind and carnal heart, but revealed unto the believer by the Spirit. (Comp. 1 Cor. ii.)

The Word of God is a mine of such mysteries, and only the Spirit-taught believer can enter into these wonders, or having entered, find these dark caverns lit up with glory and disclosing their beauty. Nothing has

been taught us by centuries of Bible study more emphatically than this, that the humblest man, taught of God, can find in the Word of God a charm and a riches wholly undiscovered by the finest scholar who is not illuminated by the Spirit.

Doddridge, the expositor, affirmed that when he came to any passage of Scripture which he found unusually difficult to explain, he always went to an unlettered man whom he knew to be preëminently taught of God, and submitted the passage to him, and *never without receiving new light.*

This experience is constantly verified. God reserves the highest secrets in His school for those who in studying His great text-book submit themselves to the instruction of the Author Himself. The most helpful method of study is prayer for Spirit-guidance. He who meditates on the Word day and night, devoutly seeking divine help in its intelligent understanding, will develop a true *originality* in his teaching, but it is the originality not of the *inventor,* but of the *discoverer.* Preaching becomes, in the case of such a man, "thinking God's thoughts after God"—like Kepler's discoveries amid the planets and stars. The first quality of a minister of the Gospel is this divine insight into God's truth.

The Unveiled Eye II.

"Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away."—*2 Cor. iii.* 16.

What is here applied to the Jew is the assertion of a universal principle of divine dealing.

The Jew, to this day, reads the Old Testament blindly. Abundant and convincing as are the prophecies concerning our Lord in the Old Testament, and exact as are the

correspondences of New Testament events with those predictions, the Jew takes up the two and compares them, and yet does not see the resemblance. There is a veil over his eyes which effectually hides from him the perception and reception of the truth. To us it is absolutely amazing that any man who, like Agrippa, believes the prophets, is not altogether persuaded to become a Christian. There are three hundred and thirty-three predictions about the Messiah scattered from Genesis iii. to Malachi iii.; and after four centuries of prophetic silence Christ came and, in even the least respect, fulfilled these predictions. The chance of such fulfilment being accidental is only as one in eighty-five, multiplied sixteen times by a million! Yet the Jew does not see it, as the blind man does not see the blaze of noonday light.

Nevertheless when the heart of the Jew shall turn to the Lord the veil shall be taken away. Let antagonism to truth disappear; let hostility to the God of truth be removed; let there be a real turning of the face toward the God of light, and light will break in upon the whole nature.

This is a universal law. Sin is blinding, veiling to the understanding. Every known neglect of duty or transgression of law helps to hide God, and truth, and law, and duty from the soul. Conscience becomes the accomplice of sin, and the judgment is warped and swayed in the interests of evil-doing. Every time one does evil he shuts out a little more light, until all the light that is in him is turned to darkness. Every time he does his duty, turns from a known sin, or undertakes to follow God more closely, he lets in more light and gets more grace. So "the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Principle of Preference I.

"Because thou hast asked this thing . . . I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honour."—1 *Kings iii.* 11-13.

It is God's way to reward the choice of the supreme or higher good by the bestowment of the lower.

There is in this method of dealing a divine philosophy which is not hard to recognise. The essential principle of idolatry is the putting of some inferior object of desire, affection, or pursuit into the supreme place—the place of God—so that it hides God from the soul. The first commandment of the Decalogue is, "Thou shalt have no other gods *before Me*." "Covetousness" is "idolatry," because it lifts gold or some other coveted form of treasure or pleasure to the throne and makes the man of greed a worshipper of Mammon. But so soon as God is made and kept supreme in the soul, what would otherwise be master now becomes servant to Him as Master. God is a God of love, and is glad to give all good things to His own dear children; whether a gift would prove good, a blessing or a curse, depends on the attitude of mind in the receiver. In one of the fine etchings by which Retzsch illustrates Faust the roses that drop from heavenly gardens are represented as turning to burning coals when they pass into the sulphurous atmosphere of the underworld where demons dwell.

When the Lord appeared to the youthful king, Solomon, in a night vision and bade him "ask what I shall give thee," the wise young monarch asked for "an understanding heart to judge the people." His supreme desire was that he might not err in judgment, or fail to discern between good and bad. "The speech pleased the Lord." Because the higher good was preferred, the lower good could safely be bestowed; and so God tells Solomon that because he had asked for wisdom in ad-

ministration and had not asked for himself long life, riches, or the sacrifice of the lives of enemies, He would grant him what he had not asked, both wealth and honour.

Fix your eye upon the *summum bonum*—the highest good—and leave God to give you all else so far as it can contribute to your attainment of your chief desire.

The Principle of Preference II.

"Seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you."—*Luke xii.* 31.

Such is the promise; how about the fact? Look back over your whole life. Have you sought first the extension of that Kingdom and the incorporation into your own life of that righteousness? And have you in a life of consecrated service actually suffered from want?

"When I sent you forth without purse, or scrip, or shoes," says the Master, "lacked ye anything?" We must answer, "Nothing." Has one promise of the Lord, on which you rested in faith, failed you? Imagination may picture to us possible want in the future; but when memory draws the scenes on the canvas of the past, she witnesses that, to all His Word, He is faithful that promised.

There is a principle of service revealed in this precept selected from the Sermon on the Mount. The life of service must be a life of faith, of dependence on God. The current notion is that, when the Lord sent out the apostles without purse, food, or extra garments, such dependence on the Almighty was only for apostolic days. That notion is one of the chief practical heresies of our day! As though we had got beyond the need of faith! Hear the motto of all service: "We walk by faith, not by sight." Some modern disciples seem to read this reversely: "We walk by sight, not by faith." But I do not

find that anywhere in Scripture. We have as much call to live a life of trust as primitive Christians had. God's servants need the single eye; no man can see double and see correctly; nor have we the power, like the chameleon, of turning one eye toward heaven, while the other is turned toward earth. God wants single-eyed servants, who see clearly because they see singly.

In other words, you cannot attend to the affairs of the Kingdom and be worried about the affairs of the world. Care cannot *provide,* but it can *divide;* it cannot supply our wants, but it can distract and divert the heart and mind from God's work. And to prevent such divided allegiance, the Lord calls us to his service exclusively, and then assures us He will take care of all the rest. Worry is therefore both needless and sinful.

The Power of the Great Name I.

"Thus saith the Lord God, I do not this for your sakes . . . but for mine holy name's sake."—*Ezek. xxxvi. 22.*

The *Name of God* stands for the *character* of God, for His whole personality. When we speak of Daniel Webster or Robert Peel, of Tennyson or Livingstone, of Alexander or Napoleon, the man stands before us—all his history, characteristic traits, career, destiny, embraced in the name. We must not make the name of God the equivalent for His fame. His fame may be dimmed or even aspersed among men; He may be thought of and spoken of unjustly and falsely, and even blasphemously, until He is no longer held in holy reverence; but His name remains unchanged, for His character is not affected by His reputation. He declares Himself to be exceedingly *jealous* for His holy name, for His divine perfection is immaculate, and He would so be known to His creatures.

Thousands of precious promises accordingly cluster

about His name. For His name's sake He will do, He says, great things; He will be faithful to His word, His oath, else what becomes of the truth, the justice, the trustworthiness of His character?

We need to get hold of this great thought that all perfection is in Him, and that the true spring and source of all His activity is in Himself. He exercises mercy, Micah tells us, "Because he delighteth in mercy"; not because the needy, guilty condition of His sinning creatures invites the exercise of grace, so much as because He is overflowing with Fatherly pity.

Hence follow two great conclusions: First, our ultimate reliance for all true blessing is on this, that He does all this for His name's sake. We may vacillate in our measure of fidelity, but He never changes in the infinite fulness of His love and pity. And we must therefore look not within, as scanning our own merit, but without, as dwelling on His changeless perfections.

And, secondly, our highest perfection is to know His name by sharing His holiness. To bear His name! How august and awful a privilege and distinction! How solemn the responsibility to be called "*godly*" and to be in charge of the divine character among men as the bearers of the ark of the covenant! What should not God's saints stand ready to do or suffer for His name's sake as custodians of His name among the heathen and the world.

The Power of the Great Name II.

"Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."—*John xvi.* 24.

Old Testament saints had never known this privilege; nor had even New Testament suppliants, however favoured with the most advanced knowledge of divine things, ever yet prayed in Jesus' name. And for an obvious reason—not until now had any believer ever known

the glorious truth of the *unity and identity of Christ and His disciples.* All the glorious representations of the unity existing between the believer and his Lord were reserved for the period of His incarnation. The sevenfold exhibition of that Unity is exclusively in the New Testament: the Sheep and the Shepherd, Vine and Branches, Building and Living-stones, Body and Members, Bridegroom and Bride, Household or State, and the family or citizens, and that most consummate form of statement: He that is joined to the Lord is *One Spirit* *—all these had to wait for Christ's birth, death, resurrection, and ascension, and the coming of the Holy Ghost, to make them plain or apprehensible. Here we are taught that such perfect union exists between the believer and the Lord Jesus, that there is a mutual indwelling and abiding; so it is not needful that the Lord Jesus should pray for us, since the Father Himself identifies us with His Son, and loves us for His sake.

How inadequately do all precious teachings and types forecast such a glorious fact and privilege! Ahasuerus, handing over the imperial signet ring to Mordecai and Esther, said: "Write as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring; for the writing which is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's ring may no man reverse." † The proclamation that thus went out was in every respect the king's own decree. What they did in his name he did through them. And our Lord conveys to us the Signet Ring of God, and bids us ask what we will—and seal our prayer with God's own Signet. In Revelation viii. this same truth is robed in apocalyptic metaphor—our great High Priest offering up prayers of saints in his own Golden Censer, perfumed with His own infinite merit; and then hurling back to earth the fires of God, producing great convulsions in answer to the supplications of His people.‡

* 1 *Cor. vi.* 17. † *Esther viii.* 8 ‡ *Rev. viii.* 1-8.

The Secret of Victory I.

"Their defence is departed from them; and the Lord is with us, fear them not."—*Numbers xiv.* 9.

When the spies returned from exploring the Land of Promise, they all described the land in the same language, as a land that "floweth with milk and honey"; and they all confessed that the people dwelling therein were very strong, and their cities walled, and the children of Anak were there. The difference between Caleb and Joshua and the other ten spies was that these two faithful men encouraged the people to go up and possess the land, as able in God's strength to overcome even these giant Anakim.

It is no part of faith or fidelity to deny or depreciate the difficulties in the way of holy living, nor the multitude and strength of our foes. Paul certainly does not so write to the Ephesians when he says: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might; for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers," etc. We have not only flesh and blood to contend with—ourselves, our fellowmen, a wicked world—but demons, and the devil at their head.

But what we need is to remember that God, who is on our side, is mightier than them all, and that "one with God is a majority." What an object lesson is the history of Israel on this point! How invincible before all foes when God was with them, and how cowardly, dastardly, and weak whenever He forsook them! One could chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, but it all depended on alliance with the Almighty; otherwise the sound of a shaking leaf could produce a perfect panic.

All victory over sin, temptation, trial, difficulty, is of

God. We must lay hold of divine strength, and then nothing can stand before us. But in our own strength we are nothing and can do nothing. The iron that touches the magnet becomes magnetic and exercises all the power of the magnet; but apart from the magnet, it loses all that mysterious power to attract and hold to itself. We must keep in close touch with God by the contact of faith and fellowship—then we need fear nothing. Omnipotence is behind our impotence. Jehovah is our stay; and they who oppose us, fling themselves on the bosses of His buckler.

The Secret of Victory II.

"Greater is he that is in you than he that is the world."—1 *John iv.* 4.

THE contrast here is between the indwelling Christ and the Prince of this world and the evil spirits or demons under his control.

The greatness of the devil is conceded by the very fact of the comparison with the superiour greatness of the Son of God. Satan is wise, but not omniscient; mighty, but not omnipotent; and works in human hearts, but is not omnipresent. Christ has infinite attributes and has for us overcome Satan, so that He, dwelling in us, assures us of victory. We shall shortly bruise Satan under our feet as He has already done.

This epistle gives us hints of the secrets of this overcoming power.

I.—For instance, "The *Word of God* abideth in you and you have overcome the wicked one" (ii. 14). In the hour of temptation the Word of God proved an all-sufficient arsenal and armory for the Son of God to draw from, and only with its weapons did he fight the

devil. There is a text of Scripture for every need, if we only find it—an answer of God for every temptation.

II.—Again, the *seed of God is in you,* and you cannot go on sinning (iii. 9). All vegetable seeds have their affinities in the soil. Some take up sugar, others starch, others salt, others silica; and you cannot make any seed take up any substances hostile to the life of the plant it represents. There is in every child of God the participation of the divine nature—a holy affinity which repels sin and draws toward righteousness.

III.—Again, *God Himself is in us* (iii. 24). All the power of the Godhead is on the side of a true believer. Whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God (*i. e.,* the divine Son Himself) keepeth him, and that wicked one toucheth him not.*

If we but felt the power of such truths, what lives we should lead! How holy and blameless and triumphant is God! With God's word, God's own nature, with its inherent love of holiness, and God's own Son, abiding in us by His Spirit, how mighty we become to resist all the powers of darkness!

God's Mercy and Truth I.

"Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old."—*Micah vii.* 20.

This, the concluding passage of this book, is the key to Micah's prophecy. The word *Micah* means, "Who like unto God," and the meaning of the name is referred to in the eighteenth verse, "Who is a God like unto thee!"

The particular promise which concludes this whole prophecy contains two pregnant words, *truth* and *mercy,* and it is noticeable in what order they come—what was

* The true reading of 1 *John v.* 18.

mercy to Abraham was truth unto Jacob. Why? Because when God made the covenant with the father of the faithful, promising certain privileges and blessings to his seed, God's act was one of pure mercy. He was under no obligation, self-imposed or otherwise, to do as He did. But after such promise was made to Abraham, God, the Promiser, was bound by His word and His oath; and so what was *mercy* to the father became *truth* to the son, Jacob.

Every promise is at first a matter of pure grace; but from the moment of its being given it becomes a matter of debt—God owes it to Himself, to His own word and truth, to the expectation He has awakened in His creatures, to do as He has said.

What boldness this gives the suppliant in prayer and the obedient soul in walking with God! It was this which gave Jeremiah such confidence when he was pleading for his people: "Do not abhor us, for Thy name's sake! *Do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory!* Remember, break not Thy covenant with us." (Jerem. xiv. 21.) Jehovah had bound Himself by His own covenant; and the prophet, jealous for God's name or reputation, besought Him not to permit the throne of His glory to be disgraced by even the appearance of untruthfulness or unfaithfulness on His part. Moses in the same way entreated God not to forsake or utterly destroy his pilgrim people, lest the enemies of the Lord should say: "He brought them out of Egypt, but He could not bring them into the Land of Promise."

Our Heavenly Father knows the infirmity of our faith, and so He graciously represents Himself as being put under obligations by His own oath, so that to be faithful to His promise has passed out of the realm of simple mercy into that of truth. "If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself."

God's Mercy and Truth II.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."—1 *John* 1. 9.

THE language of this promise is among the wonders of the inspired word.

"*Faithful* and *just* to forgive." What have faithfulness and justice to do with forgiveness? Are they not rather opposed to the pardon, and especially free pardon of transgressors?

It is the very essence of good government that the sinner cannot escape just judgment. Penalty and reward are the sanction of law, the pillars that sustain the arch of government. One of the sages of Greece ironically referred to the statutes of men as spiders' webs, in which the little flies get hopelessly caught, but which the strong and great break through and escape. A faithful and just judge is one who never lets a criminal evade or avoid the legal penalty; and this makes society secure.

And yet in the model government of God faithfulness and justice are arrayed on the side of forgiveness. Had this verse read: "He is merciful and gracious to forgive us our sins," it would have seemed consistent, for it is the province of mercy and grace to exercise clemency; but fidelity is inflexible and justice is stern and severely exact.

How shall we reconcile the paradox? Let it be remembered that God was not under any obligation to forgive sin until he had *so promised.* After that, fidelity and justice demanded that He shall pardon all who conform to the conditions. He had said: "Whoso covereth his sins shall not prosper; but he that confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy." (Prov. xxviii. 13.)

And henceforth He is bound by His own word. He

must pardon in order to be faithful to Himself, and in order to be just to the expectation He has awakened. And so what is taught in Micah vii. 20, "Thou wilt perform the *truth* to Jacob, the *mercy* to Abraham which thou hast sworn unto our fathers in the days of old," is here taught us anew. What was a word of pure mercy to Abraham became a word of truth to Jacob; and the promise of forgiveness to penitent sinners, at the first a matter of grace, has now become a matter of obligation; not only God's love, but his faithfulness and justice, now constrain Him to extend pardon to every confessing and forsaking evildoer.

God's Infinite Power and Love I.

"For as the heaven is high above the earth so great is His mercy toward them that fear him: as far as the East is from the West, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us."—*Psalm ciii.* 11, 12.

THE Bible often labours to express divine ideas which human words are so utterly inadequate to express.

This is a psalm containing nothing but praise; there is not one *petition* here from beginning to end. The writer seems most of all oppressed with the conception of the infinite power and mercy of God, as Isaiah was when he exclaimed in God's name, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

How high is the heaven above the earth? The distance is immeasurable. So far off is the nearest fixed star that all standards of calculation and measurement fail to serve us in conveying any conception of space so infinite. What shall be said of the remoteness of suns, far greater than our own, but which are so far off that their light, travelling two hundred thousand miles every

second, has taken millions of years to reach this planet! And how far is the east from the west! Observe that the distance is not to be measured from any *one point* in the east to another in the west. The east and west represent not *localities,* however remote, but *directions,* exactly opposite. Is there any limit to an eastern or western direction? Yet God says to us that only when we can measure the height of the starry heavens above the earth, or the extreme limits of east and west, can we estimate the greatness of his illimitable power and love.

Before such heights and depths, such breadths and lengths, even angels stand confounded. Into this abyss that has no bottom, into this expanse that has no bounds, they desire to look, but are not able. It surpasses the intelligence of the cherub, the love of a seraph. Paul could only exclaim, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!"

Yet all this unsearchable grace and illimitable might are at the disposal of every humble, trusting, penitent believer who comes to God in Christ, to be reconciled, adopted, redeemed. Every such disciple can say of Jehovah, "He is *my God!*"

God's Infinite Power and Love II.

"Able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."—*Ephes. iii.* 20.

THE Epistle to the Ephesians is the Alps of the New Testament, and here is perhaps the highest peak in the range of promises about prayer. There is here a peculiar piling up of words, like Ossa upon Pelion, and Olympus upon Ossa. "Able to do"—that is a general statement of God's power to accomplish for us, and may

stand as the broad base of a pyramid of promises. Let us note the steps or stages of ascent.

First, able to do *what we ask.* That is a large assurance. Think of all we are capable of asking for ourselves, our daily needs of body, soul, and spirit; our families, our neighbours, and the wide, wide world; think how the range of our requests broadens when we learn to ask in Jesus' name and feel the power of identity and sympathy with the world's Saviour.

But He is able, secondly, to do ALL that we ask. Take the vast sum of all our requests, of all that all saints are capable of asking in faith, and in Jesus' name, and you have not exhausted God's power.

For, thirdly, he is able to do what we *think,* and, fourthly, *all* that we *think.* Now you must add to all possible requests all possible desires and aspirations entering into the secret realm of imagination and yearning. Who shall ever explore that realm fully? Yet even this cannot exhaust God's power, for,

Fifthly, He is able to do "*above* all we ask or think." And, sixthly, "*abundantly* above all we ask or think"; seventhly, "*exceeding* abundantly above all we ask or think." The original is, if possible, stronger than the English, for it conveys the idea of an *excess beyond an overflow of abundance,* as though the writer were vainly striving to express inexpressible things.

How little we know of the power of prayer, and of asserting our privilege in entering into the secret place and claiming all that God waits to give!

Surely such prayer is among the lost arts of holy living which were so well known in the apostolic age. We have no real conception of the wonders possible to the prayer of faith; that is limited only by the power and love of God.

The Power of Expectation I.

"Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it."—*Psalm lxxxi.* 10.

THIS is *George Müller's* text. When this grand man began his orphanage work, now more than half a century ago, he was so poor that he had absolutely no bread to eat save as his Heavenly Father fed him. Of course in such poverty there were no resources from which to draw for a great enterprise like the housing of homeless waifs. But this work was laid on his heart to do for the Lord, and he ventured somewhat timidly to ask for a small house and a few orphans with which to begin his ministry to the Lord's poor.

He observed that he got just what he asked, and asked in faith, but the Lord's dealing kept pace pretty nearly with his expectations, and so the work was kept within narrow limits. One day he read these words, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it," and a new thought flashed on him. "Like the children of Israel in the desert I have been *limiting the Holy One by my unbelief.* He yearns to give largely, but my faith is so small that it hinders my capacity to ask and receive."

He read the psalm again and again, and the thought grew upon him. Israel forgot the Lord's mighty works. With what wonders and signs did He bring them out of the land of Egypt? Yet they doubted his power and grace; and they said, Can God "set a table in the wilderness?" He would have fed them "with the finest of the wheat and with honey out of the rock" could he "have satisfied" them, but they opened not their mouths save in complaint and murmuring.

Then Mr. Müller remembered how, when the mother bird brings a dainty morsel to her little fledglings, they open their beaks as wide as they can stretch them, waiting to receive the food which is to satisfy their wants.

God likes to see his children open wide their mouths in expectation of great gifts, and from that day George Müller learned to attempt great things for God and expect great things from God, as the twenty-seven hundred windows of the five large buildings that look out on Ashley Down in Bristol, England, bear witness.

This godly man has been permitted during these fifty years to house thousands of orphans and to disburse millions of pounds sterling.

The Power of Expectation II.

"What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them."—*Mark xi.* 24 (R. V.)

FAITH and prayer are so intimately associated that we cannot speak of one without at least implying the other. But let us mark that there are *different levels of prayer.*

Our Lord's first lesson on prayer was, "Ask and it shall be given you," etc. But then as we go on in Matthew a new element is emphasised: "Whatsoever ye ask in prayer, *believing,* ye shall receive." Here is an advance lesson; not simple asking in faith but receiving according to faith. But when we come to the Gospel of John, we read the most marvellous words which our Lord ever spoke on prayer: "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name," "whatsoever ye shall ask the father in my name he will give it to you." This is something beyond simple *asking,* beyond simple asking *in faith.* This is asking by virtue of and because of our *identification with Christ. His Name is His person,* so that God does not look upon us as we are in ourselves, but looks on us as we are in *Jesus Christ.* Here is a "region beyond" in the matter of prayer, of which one man or woman in a thousand has scarce dreamed. When any

one presents a request in the name of another, it is really *that other person* who asks the favor; and when I go to the Father in Jesus' name—reverently let me say it—*Christ is the suppliant;* and because the Father can deny the Son nothing that He wants, it is certain that what I ask in His Name I shall receive—nay, it is my privilege to believe that I have already received it, so certain is the answer.

Let us suppose that the Christian Church should get hold of this power of prayer, and get above the level of simple asking in faith, and realise her identity with the Lord and the privilege of praying in the name of Jesus; then, keeping in fellowship with Christ, nourishing and cherishing this daily walk with Him, and therefore having, within, the groanings unutterable awakened by the Holy Ghost—these presented in the golden censer of Christ before the throne would certainly be heard and heeded by the Father, and so without doubt the greatest need of to-day is new prayer—on the *highest level* of prayer.

The Knowledge of Duty I.

"The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach his way."—*Psalm xxv.* 9.

In this psalm there are ten promises assuring God's saints of His guidance, and they are followed by the response of the obedient soul: "Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord."

The saint is a scholar in God's school, and here is a hint of one of God's chosen ways of teaching. He will guide the teachable soul *by a glance of His eye.* "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou wilt go; I will guide thee with mine eye." Psalm xxxii. 8. And

the docile child of God therefore responds, "Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens. Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hands of their masters . . . so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God." Psalm cxxii. 1, 2.

In the East to this day servants are guided by the glance of the master or mistress, and it is very remarkable how much can be conveyed through a look. Travellers in Damascus, for example, have often found their entire entertainment conducted by their host, without one spoken word, by this marvellous telegraphy of a look. A glance summons refreshment, brings saddled horses or mules for a journey, prepares couches for repose, or makes ready the bath.

But, to make such guidance effective, there must be the answering look, and the obedient will. God has in His school too many refractory pupils, and when He cannot guide with His eye, He has to resort, like human teachers, to sterner, harsher ways of controlling. Is not this the meaning of the warning which follows this promise? "Be ye not as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle." If these dumb, irrational beasts could be guided by a glance, the bit and bridle might be dispensed with.

God prefers to guide his children by gentle means, and only when these fail does he use others. Blessed is he indeed who keeps his eye on God's eye, and whose will waits on God's will, to whom the faintest sign or signal from God is a command to be instantly, implicitly, and lovingly obeyed. Let us cultivate instant, constant, watchful habit of holy obedience.

The Knowledge of Duty II.

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."—*John xiii. 17.*

THE scope of practice is knowledge, and the object of knowledge is practice. There is a blessedness in doing what we know we ought to do, and duty may become a delight if we patiently and constantly perform duty. As in the old fable of the wingless birds that at first bore their wings as burdens until they grew fast, so weights often change to pinions.

Compulsion is not God's law of living, but a holy freedom—liberty in Christ. At Oxford, a quarter of a century ago, not only was attendance at chapel compulsory with students, but, far more surprising and repulsive, even attendance at Sacrament, students having to pay a fine for absenting themselves as for a misdemeanour!

James* tells us that the "pure *ceremonial,*" the form of outward religion which is the sight of God "pure and undefiled," is the visiting of "the fatherless and widows in their affliction" and the keeping of one's self "unspotted from the world"—not a constrained service but a willing and loving ministry to want and woe, prompted by love to the Lord himself.

The figure here is that of a priest moving about from altar to altar in his white garments, never sitting down—a ceaseless service, going from house to house in unwearied ministries in Christ's name; as Jesus himself went about doing good. Here is another hint on the *happiness* of doing the will of God.

Let any believer who would learn the preciousness of this promise undertake simply to do what he *knows* to be the will of God—*to live up to his light;* and if he does not become a "happy man" the promise will utterly fail. It has never failed yet.

* *James i. 27.*

He who knows his duty and does it is counted worthy of higher knowledge; for in God's school we are never taught a second lesson until we have mastered the first. "If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine." There is thus no blessing which does not follow in the wake of obedience—more knowledge of God's will, more facility and felicity in doing it, a sense of fellowship with Him, and of His presence in our life—these are a part of the elements of that happiness that comes in the pathway of faithful doing.

The Secret Place with God I.

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."—*Psalm xci.* 1.

THIS is a wonderful promise, opening the door to a wonderful psalm. The author, if we may trust tradition, is Moses, and this is the "Psalm of the Exodus," best understood if we imagine the Hebrew family surrounding the paschal lamb on the fatal night of the death of the first-born of Egypt, while the angel of the Lord "passed over" the blood-sprinkled houses in his visit of wrath and judgment.

The psalm is a sort of dramatic dialogue, in which three parties take part. First, the angel from without speaks, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty," as though to remind the believing disciples who were within, hiding behind the blood, of their safety. Then, from within, the disciple responds, "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge, and fortress; my God; in Him will I trust." Then again the angel responds, "Surely He shall deliver thee," etc. Then at verse 14 Jehovah himself speaks, and so the psalm concludes. By reading this sublime poem in the light of a dialogue new meaning is imparted to it. As the ninetieth is the psalm of death,

this is the psalm of life, and speaks to the believer of his entirely secure refuge behind the atoning blood.

The assurance in verse 3, "Surely he shall deliver thee . . . from the noisome pestilence," proved to Charles H. Spurgeon a great comfort in a peculiar crisis. When he first settled in London, a scourge of cholera swept over the city; and he, with his intensely sympathetic nature, gave himself no rest in constant ministries to the sick and dying and in burying the dead. One day while walking through the streets he felt himself so worn and weak as to be a fit subject for the pestilence. Just then in a shop opposite he saw on the window pane a large sheet of foolscap paper and curiosity drew him in to read it. He found it bore this promise; and from that hour he went forward and without a fear, continuing his sacred ministry to sorrow.

How many other saints have, by this psalm, entered into the secret refuge of secure trust in God!

The Secret Place with God II.

"Enter into thy closet . . . and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."—*Matt. vi.* 6.

This is the first of our Lord's ten progressive lessons on prayer which are to be distinctly traced in the four gospel narratives. The first lesson lays the foundation of all the rest, and it is the lesson of *secret communion alone with God.* On this hangs the special promise: "Thy father which seeth *in secret* shall reward thee *openly.*"

God is invisible, spiritual; He seems to us distant and unreal, because He is a spirit. Yet on the reality of the divine existence depends all our real holiness and power in living and serving. How shall we attain unto this sense of God, except by what Jeremy Taylor in his

"Holy Living" calls "the practice of the presence of God"? It is in the closet that the spiritual senses are "exercised to discern both good and evil"; that we learn to see things invisible to the natural eye, to hear the still small voice, inaudible to the fleshly ear, to "handle" God and so perceive that it is he himself. The soul of the suppliant finds the closet his holy of holies, where at the mercy seat he communes with God, all other presence being shut out. There in the secrecy, solitude, separation, the praying disciple meets the Father and holds with him sweet fellowship; not only addressing to him devout desires and requests, but receiving from him answers of peace and communications of power.

The promise is, "He shall reward thee *openly*." No human being can habitually frequent the closet without showing it, unconsciously and blessedly, in his intercourse with men. There will be a new light and lustre on his face as on that of Moses, though like him he may not know that his face shines. And in his character, conduct, disposition, and speech, he will manifest openly that he has seen God in the secret place. Men whose walk is holy have always been known as men of prayer.

Mr. Stanley spent four months with David Livingstone in the heart of Africa. He says that Dr. Livingstone never directly spoke to him about his soul's salvation, but he adds that there was something about him that showed the indwelling of God and made him desire to find a similar faith and hope for himself.

The Presence of the Lord I.

"My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."—*Exod. xxxiii.* 14.

This promise was literally and visibly fulfilled in the mysterious pillar of cloud and fire which was the companion of the children of Israel in all their long wanderings in the wilderness.

Was there ever such a pillar of cloud before or since? *Intelligent,* for it chose the way for their journeys and determined both their marching and resting; *vocal,* for out of it came the voice of the Lord Himself in command, in counsel, in promise, in rebuke; *powerful,* for it was both a guidance and a defense, insuring provision and protection to all obedient followers; *glorious,* for God dwelt in it, in the fire which represents His holiness and the cloud which symbolises His mystery.

That same Presence, though now invisible, is as real as ever to a true child of God. He hears the voice, counselling, commanding, sometimes also warning and admonishing, but always a welcome voice. Like Constantine at Byzantium, devout, obedient disciples may reverently say to those who understand not the mystery of such guidance, "I am following One who is leading me."

And that Presence is the one secret of *rest.* To know that God is with me, that makes work itself restful, and sorrow peaceful. Success without God is failure; failure, with God, is success. "One with God is a majority." Much of our weariness and exhaustion, if not all of it, is traceable to activity that is not blessed and *eased* by the sense of His presence. We work in the energy of the flesh instead of the energy of the spirit. We get into the hurry, worry, flurry of haste and waste, which always go together. But to be ever in His presence, and to wait on Him, renews strength, and we not only walk without faintness and run without weariness, but we mount upon tireless wings as eagles.

The history of the Church reveals, at frequent intervals, conspicuous instances of men of God, who, in comparatively feeble bodies, have, like Paul, Wesley, Whitefield, Spurgeon, astonished the world by their prodigious and untiring labours. They had found the rest of God's presence.

The Presence of the Lord II.

"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another comforter that He may abide with you forever."—*John xiv.* 16.

Is this a transient vision to you or is it His own promise which is given in that Word which endureth forever? Alas! that we were ever so unbelieving! Not what we know, but what we know we know, constitutes our spiritual wealth. I must have read these words of Jesus again and again, but somehow they had no really practical meaning to me. Then came a blessed and ever-to-be-remembered crisis in my spiritual life when from a deeper insight into the Scriptures the doctrine of the Holy Spirit began to open to me. Now I apprehended in what sense and how Jesus is present: not in some figurative or even potential sense, but literally and really present in the Holy Spirit, his invisible self. "And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another comforter, *that he may abide with you forever.*" John xiv. 16. The coming of the other Paraclete was conditioned on the departure of Jesus: "If I go I will send him unto you." And this promise was perfectly fulfilled at Pentecost. As truly as Christ went up, the Holy Ghost came down: the one took his place at the Father's right hand in heaven, the other took his seat in the church on earth "which is builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit." And yet, lest by this discourse about his going and the Comforter's coming we should be led to think that it is not Christ who is with us, he says, clearly referring to the Spirit: "I will not leave you orphans; I will *come to you.*" Thus is made plain that the Lord himself is truly though invisibly here in the midst of every company of disciples gathered in any place in His name.

It was after much thought on this subject that there came to me one day a still voice of admonition, saying, "There standeth one among you whom ye know not."

And perhaps I answered, "Who is he, Lord, that I might know him?" I had known the Holy Ghost as a heavenly influence to be invoked, but somehow I had not grasped the truth that he is a person of the Godhead who came down to earth at a definite time and who has been in the Church ever since.

Such was the confession I heard from the lips of that sainted man, Dr. A. J. Gordon.

God's Possession in His People I.

"I the Lord am holy and have severed you from other people that ye should be mine."—*Levit. xx.* 26.

Here is the key to the whole Levitical system. All those minute and apparently trivial regulations about clean and unclean were meant as a means of separation from all else unto God, that Israel might be unto Him a peculiar people. Compare 2 Cor. vi. 17.

"Be ye separate!" How much hangs on that! Constantly are we cautioned to beware of that subtle influence of the evil principle which is typified in "leaven," which silently and rapidly pervades the whole lump. "Beware," says our Lord, "of the leaven of the Pharisees"—ritualism—"and of the Saducees"—rationalism—"and of Herod"—secularism. Immediately after, He indirectly adds a warning against the leaven of Satan, the selfishness which prompted Peter to counsel Jesus Himself to avoid the very cross which He came to bear for our sakes.*

All leaven has its lump or mass to work on. Ritualism pervades *worship* with formalism; rationalism corrupts *faith* with false and proud reasoning; secularism compromises *Christian living* with worldly conformity;

* Compare *Mark viii.* 15; *Matt. xvi.* 6; *Matt. xiv.* 22, 23.

and selfishness makes void *evangelical truth* by the spirit of self-seeking and self-glorying.

God would have us "come out from among" all these corruptions and be separate, that we may be wholly His; and He promises to reward such separation unto Him by *His separation unto us;* He will be our God in a peculiar sense, in peculiar, intimate, blessed, and conscious fellowship. If we live as sons and daughters in our Father's presence, subject to His will alone, we shall know His Fatherhood and our sonship as others do not. With any child the sense of the filial relation is in proportion to the supremacy of the father's will and the cultivation of the father's love and companionship. But if a son turns his back on the father, like the prodigal, and keeps constant company with aliens, it is no marvel if the two come to be strangers.

God has His own peculiar way of revealing Himself to those who are peculiarly His own. Separation unto God may be costly, but its recompense richly repays the price we pay.

God's Possession in His People II.

"And his servants shall serve him."—*Rev. xxii.* 3.

BEFORE the last words are added to a complete Bible we have here in this closing chapter a sevenfold description of the perfect blessedness of God's saints in the New Paradise which finally crowns the redemptive work of Christ.

1. "There shall be no more curse": perfect sinlessness.

2. "The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it": perfect government.

3. "And his servants shall serve him": perfect service.

4. "And they shall see His face": perfect communion.

5. "And His name shall be in their foreheads": perfect resemblance.

6. "And there shall be no night there": perfect day.

7. "And they shall reign forever and forever": perfect glory.

This is the end of the Apocalypse proper: beyond this is the Epilogue corresponding to the Prologue in chapter first. Hence the importance of these seven sayings which are faithful and true and bring the book to a sublime conclusion.

It is a common idea that *service* ends with our earthly life: but it is rather only begun here and completed in heaven. "God is not the god of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him." "They rest not day nor night," because they are never weary. "Therefore are they before the throne of God and serve him day and night, in his temple." "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." All "*labours*" ended, for these involve toil, vexation, brain-sweat, and brow-sweat; but "*works*"—forms of activity—reach their completion only in the next life.

God's possession in His people is a possession of all their faculties and powers for service. We are to yield ourselves "unto God, as those who are alive from the dead and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Like any other owner, He proposes to make His property useful. Even heaven would not be perfect without some activity which brings fruit unto God. The disciple himself is to be a sacramental tree of life, bearing perennial harvests unto the divine Husbandman.

The Knowledge that Brings Privilege I.

"Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord."—*Hosea vi.* 3. The corresponding passage in the New Testament is: "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."—*John viii.* 32.

Both promises refer to the *grace of continuance.* There were those who professed to believe, but whom Christ cautioned, as in the parable of the sower, against receiving the word with a certain joy of enthusiasm, which would not stand the test of persecution or opposition, like a plant without root. It is only a holding fast to God, a growing experience of communion with Him that brings true *knowledge* and true *freedom.*

Doubt and bondage go together and both are the result of a compromise with sin or worldliness. If there be an attempt to serve God and mammon there may well be doubt which is master, or whether Christ is master at all. And if duty is attempted only because of a servile fear of consequences, it is no wonder that such a yoke of legalism allows no real liberty of choice or action. But when God is wholly chosen as Lord and Sovereign, and all compromise between sin and selfishness on the one hand and godliness and self-denial on the other is abandoned, two results follow: First, a higher knowledge of truth and of God, and, second, a sense of walking at liberty in keeping God's commands. Strange as it may seem, he who is *most perfectly the willing slave* of Christ is most consciously the *Lord's freeman.* His higher liberty is found in complete subjection.

The psalmist (Psalm li.) prays for a *clean heart,* then a *right spirit,* a *holy* spirit, a *free* spirit. The order is important—cleanliness is before righteousness. and righteousness is before holiness, and holiness alone begets true freedom.

When the *Umbria* was passing the coast of Ireland in 1892, a sailing vessel, that in the storm and fog had lost

her reckoning, sent up signals asking her latitude and longitude, which the *Umbria,* just having taken an observation, could supply. Many a soul is in danger of wreck, having lost its bearings. Blessed be he who knows his spiritual latitude and longitude, and is not in bondage to fear and uncertainty, and can give instruction and help to those who are in doubt and darkness, and lead into spiritual liberty those who are in bondage.

The Knowledge that Brings Privilege II.

"As many as received Him to them gave He the power to become the sons of God."—*John i.* 12.

Here is another knowledge that comes of following on to know the Lord—a knowledge of actual Sonship in God's household.

In order to regeneration and Sonship it is as absolutely essential for us to receive as for God to have given. So on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit as the Comforter, Advocate, Helper, and Teacher, and Guide was given to the Church. The disciples who had been before regenerated by the Spirit, as it is commonly held, now received the Holy Ghost to qualify and empower them for service. It was another and higher experience than that which they had hitherto known. It is the difference between the Holy Spirit for renewal and the Holy Spirit for service. Even Jesus, begotten by the Holy Ghost and therefore called "the Son of God," did not enter upon His public service until he had been "anointed," or "sealed," with that same Spirit through whom He had been begotten. So of His immediate apostles; so of Paul, who had been converted on the way to Damascus. And not a few thoughtful students of Scripture maintain that the same order still holds good; that there is such a thing as receiving the Holy Ghost in order to qualification for service. Many

may have this blessing in immediate connection with their conversion, from which it is not necessarily to be separated. Only let it be marked that as the giving of the Spirit by the Father is plainly spoken of, so distinctly is the receiving of the Spirit on the part of the disciples constantly named in Scriptures. When the risen Christ breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," it is an active not a passive reception which is pointed out, as in the invitation: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

As Christ, the second person of the Godhead, came to earth to make atonement for sin and to give eternal life, and we must receive Him by faith in order to forgiveness and sonship, so the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, came to earth to communicate the "power from on high"; and we must receive Him by faith in order to be qualified for service.

The Power of United Prayer I.

"Now mine eyes shall be open and mine ears attend unto the prayer that is made in this place."—2 *Chron. vii.* 15.

Prayer *in God's house* implies the element of *joint* supplication, and hence this is an Old Testament recognition of the blessing conferred upon those who unite in supplication.

Great supplicators like Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, Daniel, had not been strangers to the power of united prayer. No doubt Moses and Aaron often prayed together. Daniel and his companions in captivity in united prayer desired mercies of the God of Heaven concerning this secret—the king's dream; and the secret was revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. At the close of the fourth chapter of Genesis, as soon as the human family began to multiply, we read, "then began men to call on the name of the Lord"—the beginning

of joint worship thus being coextensive with the beginning of human history.

There are many advantages in such united prayers as in all other associated effort. Feeble faith is strengthened by contact with confident faith; weak piety stimulated by more advanced discipleship; courage comes with companionship, and selfishness is apt largely to disappear when the subjects of prayer are not individual and personal so much as collective and general. Moreover we learn to pray by praying with others; and the defects and faults of prayers are more easily seen when seen in others, and so avoided in ourselves, as the higher qualities of prayer are recognised in others and imitated in our own supplications.

God ordained common worship, in the assembling of ourselves together, therefore, for the highest ends. And we neglect such common worship at our peril. As surely as disciples grow in other graces, they are drawn to each other and begin to pray together. Notwithstanding sectarian strifes supplicating souls have drawn together, and differences have been forgotten in agreements which concerned the vital and essential matters. The instinct of praying souls brings them together, and they all *pray the same theology*. We all supplicate alike if we have been taught by the Spirit of all intercession.

God be thanked for the prayer-meeting!

The Power of United Prayer II.

"If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."—*Matt. xviii.* 19.

THIS is a lesson on *joint* supplication. The key-word is *agree,* that is, symphonise. The word itself is a whole revelation. Symphony is not an arbitrary or accidental agreement: it obeys a law that is unalterable—the *law*

of the chord. No symphony can be produced between notes which are not in harmony. A careless touch on an instrument may work not harmony, but horrible discord. The musician intelligently, instinctively strikes keys which are in accord.

The symphony of believing suppliants is not any mere covenanted agreement, unless that agreement is itself the result of the Spirit's work in bringing disciples into accord with Himself and so with each other. We are to conceive the entire body of disciples as the key-board of a vast instrument—and the Holy Spirit as the Divine Musician, laying His artist hand on two or more keys, tuned to the pitch of the instrument, and prepared to sound a perfect chord! You and I cannot agree in this sense as touching what we ask, except so far as we first agree with Him, so that our prayer is the expression of His will. Symphony with the Spirit is the basis of symphony with the disciples. Thus He may move upon hearts physically separated, but united by spiritual proximity. When the secrets of many hearts are revealed, we shall undoubtedly find that praying souls, far separated and often unknown to each other, have been led of the Spirit to pray for like things, at the same time, and with a degree of accord which can be explained only by His holy moving.

What boundless avenues of suggestion and possible power this lesson on symphony opens up! How it illuminates our Lord's words about that joint prayer for the harvest-field, and the divine thrusting forth of labourers into its wide vacancies, which is the one sovereign remedy for all the world's need.

Prayer is the soul and secret of every grandest form of service. The lost art, in the department of work for God, is the art of prevailing in prayer. Now and then only do we see men and women who seem to have recovered the lost secret, without which our power is always prevented and often paralysed!

Compensations to Patient Waiting I.

"Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us."—*Psalm xc.* 15.

This is rather a petition than a promise, yet it must not be forgotten that some of the most blessed assurances of God's Word are indirect. Many a most inspiring *promise* is to be found in the forms of inspired *prayers.* For, as the Holy Spirit never awakens a yearning which there is not something to satisfy, any petition which we are divinely authorised to offer implies and involves a corresponding assurance and answer.

This psalm of Moses, supposed to have been written with reference to the awful consumption of human life during the forty years' journey in the wilderness, closes with this inspired prayer for a compensation to all this affliction—that for every day of sorrow and every pang of grief there may be abundant recompense. We have only to submit ourselves unto God, accept His afflictions as needful for our good and seek to learn the lessons He would teach; we have only to believe in His Fatherhood—that He doth not willingly afflict; and in His Providential goodness whereby all things work together for our good, and there is not a day of sorrow which will not prepare for a day of joy, or a pain that will not introduce to a higher pleasure.

The following verses give us a hint of the *way* in which this prayer is fulfilled. "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us." In another place the psalmist yearns to "*behold* the beauty of the Lord," but how much greater a blessing to have that beauty "*upon* us" so that others behold it in us. If it be glorious to behold the sun in his strength, how much more so to receive and reflect his light as to become ourselves light bearers to a dark world, like the stars which shine in the night.

It is only "a little while" and the darkness flees away. Let there be no impatience under divine discipline. A refiner and purifier of silver *sits* beside his crucible, watching his precious metal; for he knows that one degree of heat beyond what is necessary to release the dross is injurious to the metal. And God does not forget or neglect His saints when He subjects them to the crucible of sorrow. He watches the process and puts out His fires as soon as their work is accomplished.

There is no needless pang ever borne by a child of God, perfectly submissive to His will.

Compensations to Patient Waiting II.

"I tell you that he will avenge them speedily."—*Luke xviii.* 8.

THE lesson of *importunity* in prayer is taught by our Lord under the striking form of a double parable, found in two chapters in Luke, viz., xi. and xviii.

That in Luke xviii. is a parable of contrasts. The widow had no advocate to plead her cause. Her husband being dead, she had no man to appear for her. The judge was one who had neither piety nor philanthropy. To him the widow was a mere beggar for a favour; he was indifferent to her person and to her plea; yet as a beggar he wanted to be rid of her, and so he granted her request. At every point we have the contrast suggested—the infinitely just and good Judge of all—His love and jealousy toward his own elect—their advocate in court, Jesus Christ the righteous, God's own Son, our own brother man. And the argument is cumulative—if the widow prevailed by her importunity over such indifference, and without an advocate wrested justice from such a judge when there was only his selfishness to appeal to—how much more shall the believer prevail when he meets everlasting love, as well as infinite

equity in the court, has an all-powerful advocate, and finds every perfection of the judge arrayed on his side!

The other parable teaches the same general lesson in even a more impressive form. The neighbour is a friend and can be appealed to as such. But he, too, is selfish and would gladly be rid of the trouble of getting up at midnight to supply the three loaves. And when he does yield to the demands of another's need, it is not because moved by friendship or sympathy, but because he wants to be let alone. Selfishness dictates regard for his comfort, and comfort there is none while that knocking goes on at the gate.

Here again we have an indirect argument. How much more will the Father give bread when it is his own needy children who appeal, and when love, unselfish and self-forgetting, rules in his heart—nay, when it is his own unchanging word of promise which brings the suppliant to his gate, and on that gate is written: "Knock and it shall be opened unto you."

God *urges* his children to ask. We are apt to think that He needs the urging, but He is the more willing party, and it is we whom He urges, to ask for great things.

The Power of God's Word I.

"The entrance of thy Words giveth Light."—*Ps. cxix.* 130.

This is a broad statement, an indirect promise, for there is here at once history and prophecy. All human experience confirms it. George Bowen found in Southern Madras a village immeasurably lifted above all the surrounding population; and the question arose how it came to be so. An examination proved that a copy of the New Testament in the Bengali dialect, one of the first prepared by William Carey, had found its way

thither and had been the cause of this moral uplifting. Wherever we go and compare different nations and peoples, we find that, in proportion as the Word of God has entered and had free opportunity to exercise its influence, have communities attained the highest level of intelligence and integrity. On the other hand, Milman says of the much-boasted Light of Asia, Buddhism, that it is the "vastest and fairest nothing ever passed upon mankind." In comparison with the Word of God all else seems vanity. This alone gives us the origin of all things and reveals their ultimate goal and destiny. The margin of the Bible which Savonarola studied is written all over with his neat, careful notes, which show the diligent study of the Scriptures that in those degenerate days made this monk the mighty man he was, and prepared him to be a martyr for the truth. The followers of the great Florentine were wont to come secretly and kiss the spot where the cruel flames had reduced all that was mortal of him to ashes. The reigning Duke, Pietro di Medici, desiring to stop a custom which not only annoyed him, but served to perpetuate the memory of the martyr and glorify his witness, erected on the very spot where the stake had stood a statue of Neptune, surrounded by a fountain. But the very means which the duke used to obliterate all remembrance of the sacred spot where the tragedy had been enacted served only to identify it, and to perpetuate Savonarola's name and fame to all generations. Pilgrims from every land turn toward the hallowed spot, and say: "There was burned the martyr of Florence, one of God's missionary apostles, who kept up the sacred succession in the age of the apostasy."

The Power of God's Word II.

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."—*Acts xx.* 32.

THIS is a fitting closing Message and Benediction—"To God, and the Word of His Grace"—to which Word two great powers are ascribed: (1) a power to *construct* and (2) a power to *endow*—to build up Saints as into a Temple of God, and then to flood the Temple with the Glory of the Lord! Even if the true rendering is "*Who* is able," and God Himself is referred to, He uses His Word to work these great results; and all history proves how wonderful is the power of the Word to form and fashion Saints and perfect them in Sainthood.

It is here called by a special name—"the Word of His Grace." Grace is put for, (1) The free, eternal love of God, the spring and source of every other good: 2 Tim. i. 9. (2) The free imputation of Christ's righteousness, by which we become righteous in the sight of God: Rom. v. 20. (3) The work of the Holy Spirit, renewing the soul after the image of God, and assisting us in the discharge of all those duties required of us: 2 Cor. xii. 9, (4) That state of friendship and reconciliation with God which he graciously bestows: Rom. v. 2. (5) The free love, favour, and bounty of Jesus Christ: 2 Cor. viii. 9. (6) The pure doctrines of the Gospel of Christ, proceeding from grace: 1 Pet. v. 12. (7) A liberal and charitable disposition, wrought in the heart by the grace of God: 2 Cor. viii. 7. (8) Spiritual instruction and edification: Eph. iv. 29. (9) The office of apostleship, together with ability for the work of the ministry: Eph. iii. 8. (10) A lively sense of the free, undeserved favour of God in the soul: Rom. i. 7. (11) The love of

God dwelling in the heart; or the assistance of divine grace: 2 Cor. i. 12. (12) Faith, patience, and other graces, that enable us to bear, and support us under afflictions: Phil. i. 7. (13) Eternal life, or final salvation, which God will graciously bestow, when Jesus Christ shall be revealed: 1 Pet. i. 13. (14) It is also put for something beautiful and graceful: Prov. iv. 9. And (15) For favour and friendship with man: Gen. xxxix. 4.

With this Apostolic Farewell to the Ephesian Elders we close this volume, devoutly praying that the effect of its perusal may be to build up believers in knowledge of God's truth and make them both teachers and examples of its beauty and power.

To God and His word I commend you!
All blessings of grace may He send you,
To holy obedience bend you,
And daily in mercy attend you!

His word lays the only foundation,
The true corner stone of salvation;
And builds up in sanctification,
The saints who are His new creation.

God grant, in the Holy Ghost, praying,
To keep you, beloved, from straying,
Or careless and carnal delaying,
In paths of unceasing obeying.

Be heedful of promise and warning,
The doctrine of Jesus adorning;
For night is far spent, and the dawning
Draws near, and *The Light of the Morning!*

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